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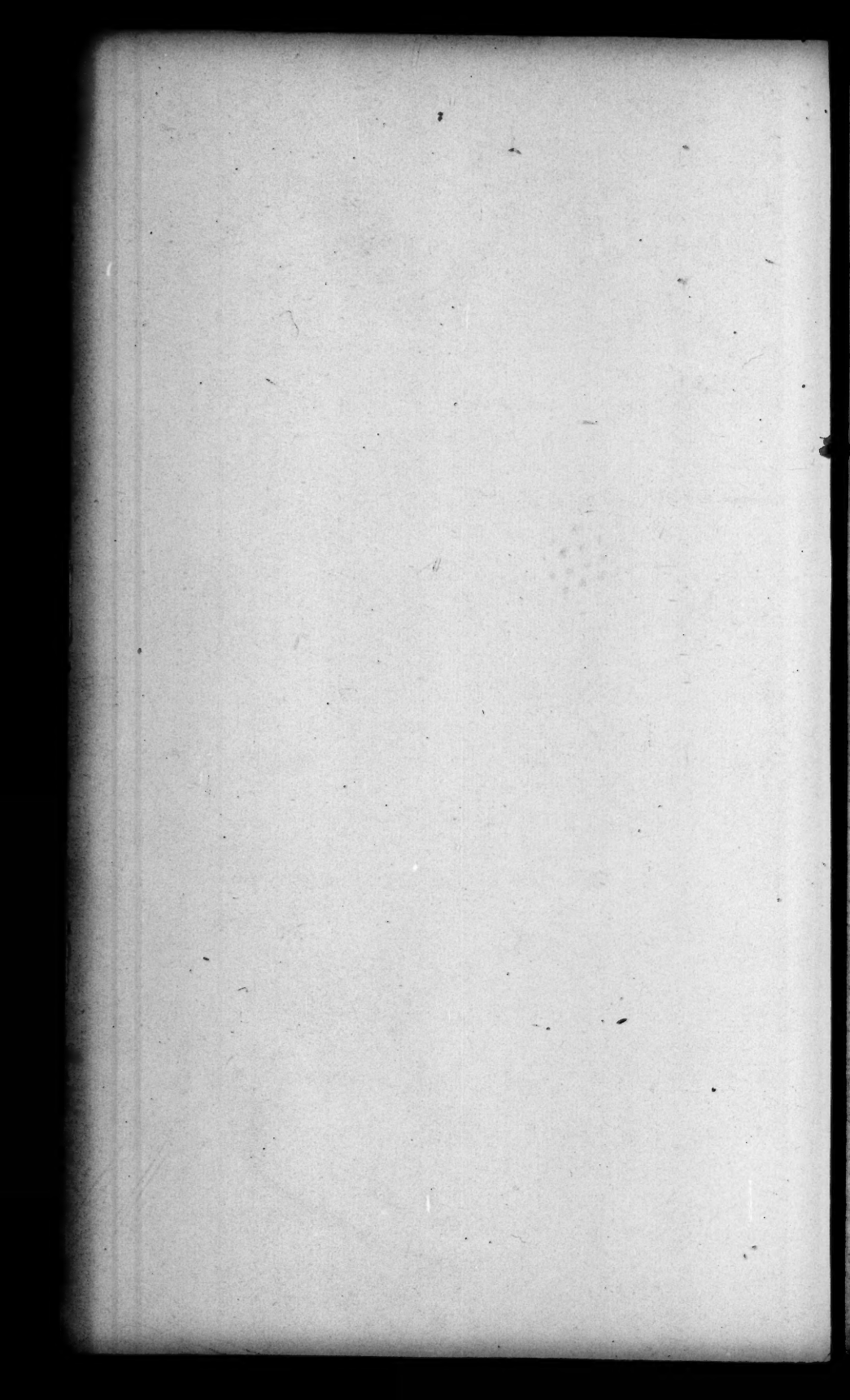
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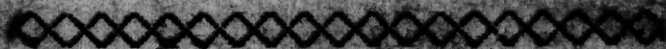


THE
HISTORY
OF

Lady LOUISA STROUD,

AND THE HONOURABLE

Mrs CAROLINE STRETTON



T

HISTORY



THE CAROLINE STRETT

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THE
HISTORY
OF
Lady LOUISA STROUD,
AND THE HONOURABLE
Miss CAROLINE STRETTON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I

LONDON,

Printed for, and Sold by, F. NOBLE,
at his Circulating Library, opposite
Grays-Inn-Gate, Holborn:

And

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MDCCLXIV.

THE
HISTORY
OF
THE
CITY OF
NEW CAROLINA



To his NEICE,
Drusilla Elizabeth Bonneau,

This WORK,
Compiled from original Papers,
By one of her own Sex,
and containing nothing contrary to
RELIGION, MORALITY, or DECENCY,
but

capable of inspiring Sentiments of
PIETY, DUTY, and VIRTUE,
is presented by Him
who sincerely wishes to see her

YOUTHFUL MIND
tinged with as few
FASHIONABLE FOLLIES
as may be:

And, when Time shall have given
Maturity to her Judgement,
that
those few may be banished for ever,
to make room for the more

ANTIQUATED,
but more

RATIONAL
Notions of her
MOTHER;
and, like her,

feel and own their Force,
long before the

HAND OF SICKNESS
shall have wrote their
VALUE.

To his Nephew
Elizabeth Bonney

This work
Compiled from original papers
by one of her own sex
and containing nothing contrary to
Religion, Morality, or Decency
but
capable of inspiring sentiments of
Purity, Duty, and Virtue
is presented by him
who sincerely wishes to see her
return to this
land with as few
YACHTSMAN'S TROUBLES
as may be
And when this shall have given
Maturity to her judgment
that
those few may be banished for ever
to make room for the more
And thus
but more
RATIONAL
Notions of her
Morals;
and like her
feel and own their force
long before the
hand of sickness
shall have worn their
value.

INTRODUCTION.

IT may not be improper to advertise the Reader, that Miss *Caroline Stretton*, the young Lady, who forms the principal Character in these Volumes, having been detected by her Uncle, Sir *Ralph Stretton*, in carrying on a Love Affair with an unworthy Object, is, by him, hurried down to his Country Seat, in order to put a Stop to all future Intercourse between them; and, as much as in him lay, to bury, in Retirement, the Indiscretion of his Niece;

Niece. And it is from thence, and under these Circumstances, that the gay, the volatile, the mortified Miss *Stretton*, writes to her amiable Friend, the Lady *Louisa Stroud*; between whom, and herself, from this Period, a Correspondence is carried on by Letter, through the whole Work, with little Interruption.

The EDITOR.

ERRATA.

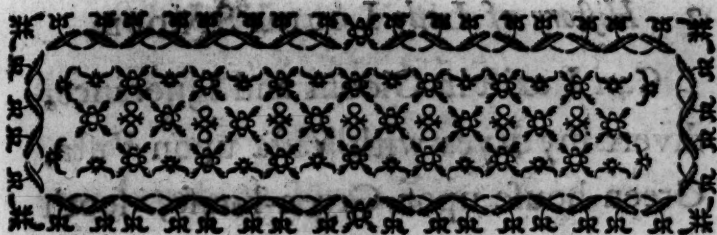
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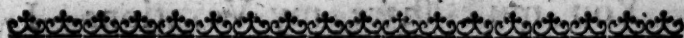
- 13 for Phenomena, read Phenomenon.
- 80 5 for inseperable, read inseparable.
- 82 3 for Dommine, read Domino.
- 85 4 for one Steps, read one's Steps.
- 95 7 for Infirmities, read Infirmities.
- 300 1, &c. for Horatia, read Horatio.

Vol. II.


Pge 80, Line 15, for Rout, read Route.



THE
HISTORY
OF
Lady LOUISA STROUD,
AND THE HONOURABLE
Miss STRETTON.



*The Hon. Miss STRETTON, to
Lady LOUISA STROUD.*

 H! my dear *Louisa*, how has
my Barbarian of an Uncle
mercilessly traped me from
the World, and all its gay Delights?

VOL. I.

B

Can

2 *History of Lady LOUISA STROUD,*

Can I exist in Gloom and Ignorance, divert my Eyes with Vista upon Vista, Green-house upon Green-house, sooth my Ears with the hideous Croaking of Rooks and Daws, or find Pleasure in contemplating my own Shadow by Moon-light? Yet these Necessities am I reduced to, maugre the Delicacy of my Education, my Tendre for dear Coquetry (as you stile my Love of Admiration) and a Fortune of thirty thousand Pounds.

You must share my Vexations—I have a right to pour them forth without Apology—for have you not shared my Satisfaction? And in Friendship, as in Matrimony, the good and bad ought to be equally divided.

Alas! what rural Adventures shall I have to relate, to induce you to relieve

and the Hon. Miss STRETTON. 3

lieve my Chagrin, by remitting me in return, the pleasing Occurrences of the dear busy Town?

Yet, if not for my Amusement, at least for my Subsistence, condescend to perform that humane, friendly Part; for I can no longer live, than whilst I receive the bewitching Intelligence.

O Fortune, Fortune, what a lamentable froward Trick hast thou now played me! But I will be composed — Patience and Resignation are heavenly Virtues: But as I, my dear *Louisa*, am a mere *earthly* Being, are you sure it will not be presumptuous in me to attempt practising them?

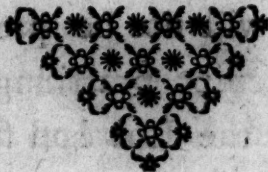
Oh that the Lot had fallen upon you! your equal, moralizing Mind would not have shrunk at Solitude.

B 2

You

4 *History of Lady LOUISA STROUD,*

You must be sensible I love you too well, notwithstanding our Dispositions are arrant Contrasts, to bear a Separation from you, without much Regret, though attended with a thousand alleviating Circumstances. But could I have remained in *London*, every Hour would have furnished me with the Means of Dissipation; whereas, in this obscure Desert, Horrors and Dispondence alone can be the Portion of your once lively, still affectionate Friend.



The

and the Hon. Miss STRETTON. 5

*The Hon. Miss STRETTON, to
Lady LOUISA STROUD.*

VAPOURED to Death; the Sun's scorching Beams are insupportable; no Shelter, but gloomy Recesses, that wear such striking Solemnity, that I could rather conceive them to be Dormitories, than cool Retreats.

The Villagers are the merest Hot-tentots in Nature; they overwhelm you with rustic Tokens of *rude* Civility: Evermore curt'fying if you approach them, and gaping at you, as if you was a Phenomena, when at some Distance.

B 3

Then

6 *History of Lady LOUISA STROUD;*

Then their Cheeks and clumsy Fists are composed of such Cherry-coloured Materials, that I cannot behold them without aching Eyes, and heart-felt Disgust.

Barking Curs, lowing Herds, bleating Sheep, and squalling Birds, are compound Sounds that perpetually invade my grated Ears. Oh! how preferable the Rattle of Coaches, and the delightfully varied Sounds that salute the Ear at Operas, Routs, Drums, and dearer Masquerades! After all, *Louisa*, it is a shocking Circumstance, for so active a Mind as your Friend possesses, to be cast into this still Life, this World of Inanimates.—I expect to be severely lashed by your Pen, for my honest Dealing—Hypocrisy, in this single Instance, I

am

and the Hon. Miss STRETTON. 7

am well assured, would have met with a good Reception from you; but I cannot, I will not, fall from my Integrity—my undisguised Sentiments shall be committed to Paper—I will not practice Evil, that Good may come of it—you will punish my Folly with a light and gentle, but Dissimulation calls for an heavy, Hand. I would be pitied, my *Louisa*, by such a Heart as yours, but I could not bear to be despised. Adieu, my beloved, my truly valuable Friend.



3 *History of Lady LOUISA STROUD,*

*Lady LOUISA STROUD, to the
Hon. Miss STRETTON.*

I AM sorry, *Caroline*, to find that your, to me, eligible Situation, sits so uneasy upon you. Alas! my Dear, the Fault lies not in the Country, but your own dissatisfied Imagination.

Would not any one conclude, from your complaining, nay, half-frantic Epistles, that you was, at this Juncture, the most injured and most wretched of Women?

Astonishing Circumstance! that a Person of real Merit and Understanding, can descend to play the giddy Triffler, and paint herself in the false Colourings you have now done!

It

It is well Sir *Ralph Stretton's* Character is too effectually established, to be hurt by his flighty inconsiderate Neice.

You ought to blush, (pardon me, my Dear) when you recollect the Obligations you have received from him, at ever dipping your Pen in such black Ingratitude as now lies before me. Has he not rescued you from a dishonourable Connexion, by the very Step that has opened your Mouth so outrageously against him? If you persist in such unworthy Returns to this best of Men, I must renounce your Friendship whatever it costs me.

You do me Justice, when you suppose retired Scenes would not shock or mortify me. I would, with Pleasure, quit all the polite disgusting

10 *History of Lady* LOUISA STROUD,

Hurry of the great World, for some peaceful Retreat. I have a natural Taste for rural Scenes, but am unwillingly detained in Dust and Confusion; yet, I am so far a Philosopher, as to suffer no murmuring Suggestions to arise in my Heart.

I possess many real and inestimable Felicities. Health, Prosperity and Reputation are not the less valuable to me, because I cannot obtain my every Wish. Convenience, or Necessity, can render all Things tolerable to a rational Mind. The Reflection, that what does befall us, not what our narrow Judgments would chuse, is the best for us; takes out the Sting of Disappointment, and prevents unworthy Repinings, and blameable Dissatisfaction.

You

and the Hon. Miss STRETTON. 11

You defeat the Purpose of your Vivacity, by suffering it to hurry you beyond due Bounds. What is more engaging than a lively Companion, so long as Discretion is kept within View? But if her Conversation once o'er-leaps that amiable Barrier, it becomes a disagreeable Jingle of mirthful Sounds, disgraceful to the Ear, and unenterprising to the Mind.

When you vouchsafe to resume your Reason, and can restrain your Attachment to public Life, within the Limits of Moderation, I will comply with your Request, of amusing you with the reigning Chit-chat of the Town. I would gladly contribute to your Entertainment, but will never consent to feed your too strong Passion for thoughtless Gaiety.

Had you not a large Mixture of Perfections with your little Follies, I would not either take the Liberties with you I now do, or cherish the sincere Affection my Heart feels for you. It is owing to the latter, that I cannot suppress my Design, of drawing them out to the World in as agreeable a Light as they appear to me, notwithstanding the thick Mist of Affectation you have suffered to gather round them. Was I capable of the narrow Sentiment of rejoicing in the little Superiority my serious Turn gives me over my Friend, with the reflecting Part of the World, I should not be so industrious to remove the obstructing Veil of her intrinsic Worth, but rather contribute to darken the unfavourable Shade; but the Esteem I bear you is as disinterested

and the Hon. Miss STRETTON. is
interested as lively, and wishes you as
many Friends, as you really have Ad-
mirers.



*Lady LOUISA STROUD, to the
Hon. Miss STRETTON.*

IN order to soften the rough Treat-
ment I gave you in my last, I thus
early resume my Pen.

I am certainly under the Influence
of some hidden Spell, that I can nei-
ther be satisfied with your Faults, nor
bear to chide you for them.

Thus a fond Mother, in the over-
flowings of maternal Tenderness, first
pities, and then pardons the pretty
Truant, before her correcting Voice
can

History of Lady Louisa STROUD,
can have made that reforming Im-
pression upon its little Heart, the
good Soul sincerely wished and in-
tended it should.

You, my *Caroline*, have a noble
Nature—Do not, then, take an im-
proper Advantage of your Friend's
Weakness, but suffer her late Advice
to have its due Weight with you.
Consider well the Circumstances of
your present Fate, and, if your sober
Sentiments do not correspond with
mine, I will renounce all Pretensions
to Penetration for the future.

You, my Dear, are young, unsus-
picious and inexperienced; but you
may take your favourite Poet's Word
for it, that

*Vice is a Monster of such hideous Mein,
As, to be hated, only need be seen.*

And

And surely you will acknowledge proving disobedient to the Commands of those, who are invested with Authority over you, by the Appointment of your deceased Father, keeping bad Company, and encouraging a notorious Villain's Addressee, to be each of them a strong Species of Vice.

What a terrible State would you now have been in, if that wicked Wretch, Lord *Westbury*, had succeeded in his Designs against you? You know it was mere Matter of Pleasantry, on your Part, until your Friends interfered. Then it was your Pride took Alarm, and prompted you to conceive your own Judgment to be superior to that of your Relations.

What the soft Persuasions of your Lover could not effect, your own Spirit

16 *History of Lady Louisa Stroud,*

rit of Contradiction had near accomplished; and you would now have been on your Return from tying that fatal Knot, (which a prior Engagement, on Lord *Westbury's* Part, would have rendered invalid) had not your kind Guardian, Sir *Ralph*, intercepted the Villain's last Letter, and stopped your Journey.

Notwithstanding your pretended Lover's known Baseness, had he engaged your Affections, how would my Heart have been torn at your Sufferings? — Had his Person been pleasing, his Address easy and polite, or his Understanding even of a common Stamp, I might have trembled for your Repose; but, deficient, as I know him to be, in every Accomplishment, I was, and am convinced,
that

and the Hon. Miss STRETTON. 17
that Vanity, and Vanity alone, induced
you to countenance him; Opposition,
to consent to be his.

When you are at Leisure, I should
be glad you would commit the Parti-
culars of that dark Affair to Paper,
for my Perusal, as I am anxious for
some extenuating Circumstance for
your Conduct. In the mean time, en-
deavour to reconcile yourself to your
Retirement, until the Remembrance
of this Error of your Judgment is
overblown.—I will answer for the good
natured Town, it will suffer you to
emerge very soon, provided some new
Tale gets wind. It has no malevo-
lence against you in particular, but
its Love of Scandal must be fed;
therefore, when another Prey occurs,
it will leave you to recover the Ap-
probation

18 *History of Lady LOUISA STROUD,*

probation of yourself and Friends, as you best may.—Who would not heartily despise such a Place?



*The Hon. Miss STRETTON, to
Lady LOUISA STROUD.*

YES, my Dear *Louisa*, I can be serious, very serious at your Request. Did I ever yet refuse you whatsoever you asked of me?

Your Reasoning, your irresistible Reasoning, has searched the inmost Recesses of my Soul, and I am fallen into Contempt even with myself.

Why did you so industriously undermine those Props of my Vivacity—Vanity and Self-Love? How poor a Figure

and the Hon. Miss STRETTON. 19

Figure do I now make, stript of all my Self-consequences?—I hate myself, indeed, *Louisa*, I hate myself, for the Folly I have practised. How could I be so infatuated, as to conceal from you, my beloved, my judicious Friend, the Entanglement in which I had involved myself? You would have discovered the fascinating Clue, and restored me to Reason, without the Assistance of Sir *Ralph's* rough clumsy Paw.

Heig-ho—you cannot conceive what a Penitent I am--- I am half inclined to fast—But do you think I stand in need of deeper Mortification than I have experienced? If you do—why I believe—I must take the Liberty of dissenting from your sage Opinion.

What

20 *History of Lady* LOUISA STROUD,

What an odd Mixture, even agreeable to your Definition, am I of Right and Wrong, Error and Perfection? I wish, my Dear, there was a Possibility of sitting off the Dross. Now do not shake your wise Head—I stand rebuked. This Stile is not sufficiently humble—does not run enough in the Penitentials—I'll try again. O *Louisa*, *Louisa*, with what Reverence do I kiss the Rod! though you must acknowledge you have whipt me severely.

But *Westbury*---How shall I speak of him with Temper, who has seduced me from the Eden of your good Opinion, and incited me to pluck, by means of his pernicious Insinuations, the Apple of Repentance?

Ah, woe is me! worse, far worse is my Condition than that same Gentlewoman

woman Mrs. *Eve's*! She had a Partner, a Participator, in her humiliating Circumstances—Her *Adam* never abandoned her, notwithstanding she was the first Transgressor.

Ah, luckless Day! what Reproaches, what officious Admonitions hast thou drawn upon my devoted Head? Yes, *Louisa*, I am a Victim, a Victim to the Baronet's Rage, a Victim to his Wisdom. Am I not at an Hundred Miles Distance from dear *London*?—Disprove but that one Assertion, and I will submit to whatever Punishment you may please to inflict.

O forgive, bear with, and pity the giddy Weakness of your *Caroline*! I take Shame to myself, for the Part I have acted—I detest my late headstrong Folly—I despise *Westbury* (whom
I never

42 *History of Lady* LOUISA STROUD,

I never loved) and most severely condemn myself---yet is my rattling Humour so predominant, that I can give you no other Description of the Snare I have avoided, than a ludicrous one.

Have I not cause to rejoice, for have I not escaped? How can you, my Dear, love so fantastical, so incongruous a Being, as I sensibly feel I am? It certainly is a very great Reflection upon your Wisdom and Understanding.

But how dare I mention Reflection? Oh! I could tear my braided Tresses with Madness—I must lay down my Pen, until my Self-Resentment is a little subsided.

Tuesday Morn.

What Mouths have not been opened against my Conduct? How deservedly have

have I not incurred their Censures? Ah! there's the Sting; can nothing extract it?

Base *Westbury*—be assured, my Dear, I never had the least Affection for him—But shall I acknowledge I was so extravagantly ridiculous and absurd, as to persuade myself, Love was a mere *Plebeian* Passion, far beneath the Consideration or Susceptibility of a Woman of my Rank? A Title, Independance, and a Sanction for indiscreet Gaiety, was all the Felicity I promised myself with Lord *Westbury*—unworthy Sentiments!—but I will not be so mean as to exculpate myself at the Expence of my Veracity—No: I was highly, nay, unpardonably to blame.

Good *Louisa*, good Sir *Ralph*, and pious Lady *Stretton*, forget this Error
of

24 *History of Lady Louisa Stroud,*
of my Youth and Vanity, and hence-
forth ye shall rule me with a silken
Rein.

Opposition and Self-opinion begone;
my Heart disclaims, renounces you for
ever. Oh! for some of the *Letbian*
Waters to wash away all disagreeable
Remembrances!—But it will not be.
You must, however, indulge me so
far, as to pass a seeming Oblivion upon
my past ill Conduct—let the Memory
of it, my Dear, lie dormant in your
friendly Breast, unless the future should
exasperate, instead of atone, that heavy
Transgression.

I can make but a poor Defence—
An improper Acquaintance led me
into an odious Connection; the De-
struction of that Connexion, you know,
brought me into the Country—am I
not

not then punished?—My Lord was a specious Villain—his Designs were levelled at my Person and Fortune, could he but have silenced an unhappy, injured young Woman, whose Virtue had drawn him into an indiscreet private Marriage. My Views extended to Liberty and the Title of Wife—He was insinuating, I was believing—He was bold, I was vain—He was base, I was imprudent—and good Sir *Ralph* was my great Deliverer.

I hope, nay, am now resolved, to reap the Benefit of your sensible Admonitions. You have ever been my candid, my judicious Monitor; but never, never more, as you love me, touch this discordant String, but kill the fatted

26 *History of Lady LOUISA STROUD;*
Calf, receive the Prodigal, and make
the best of her.

Love me, love me still, my *Louisa*, in
Spite of all Impediment—Compas-
ionate my Follies, and, if possible, freely
pardon them. Adieu.



The Hon. Miss STRETTON, to
Lady LOUISA STROUD.

YOU pity me, my *Louisa*, your
tender Nature must infallibly
incline you to pity your unhap-
py Friend. I therefore conjure you,
by that Compassion with which your
gentle Breast is informed, to tell me
what the Town is now doing.

Why

and the Hon. Miss STRETTON. 27

Why will you not revive my drooping Spirits, by some delectable Intelligence, and render me myself again?

Alas! must the Remembrance of my Errors ever remain? unrelenting World! I do, indeed, begin to despise you heartily.

When Fortune smiles, and Fame's unsullied Canopy indulgently preserves one's Brow from all infectious Blasts, then will each fluttering Belle and empty Fop simper and lisp one's Praise; but should the tainted Air, or a Mishap, occasion the fickle, hovering Phantom to drop, but for a Moment, one of its gay, out-spread Wings, the malignant Breath of Envy, Malice, and Uncharitableness bursts forth, swells into a Breeze, and terminates in a Storm.

How do I lament that *England* is unfurnished with those happy Institutions, Nunneries? O how delightful, in a Fit of mortified Pride, and heart-felt Disgust, to fly for ever the ungrateful Face of Man, by throwing one's self into such a blissful Retreat!

But don't you think, my Dear, those Nuns must lead strange Lives? No emerging! I never yet heard of an emerging Clause, in Favour of any she, whose Mind might change.

On Reflection, I renounce my former Opinion. Hideous Places! what! immured for Life? I die at the very Thoughts of such a Sacrifice.

Mercy on us! am I not as patient as a Lamb? such an Alteration has one tedious Month wrought in my Disposition, that I can suffer a Nest of senseless

and the Hon. Miss STRETTON. 29

less chirping Sparrows directly over my Dressing-room Window. I fancy, *Louisa*, I am destined for an old Maid—an ugly Omen, this Toleration of chirping.

Well, I protest there is no resisting that surprizing Operation of Nature. The sagacious Mother, my Dear, of the little feathered Tribe I just mentioned, is instructing her young ones how to fly. Excellent Caution! astonishing Instinct! I certainly shall become a Naturalist.

A most delightful Day—what a sweet Walk would that Avenue be, if it was but situated in *St James's Park*?

“*Richmond! how do I now regret thy Shades?*”

30 *History of Lady* LOUISA STROUD;

Don't you perceive, my Dear, that I am perfectly ruralized? — Admire Birds, Shades, Canals, Woods?—but, take Notice, I abhor Beasts.

There goes Sir *Ralph* and his fat Rib—On my Word, a most comely Couple! Not so fast, good Sir, not so fast; you forget my Lady wears little Shoes, and is visited with big Corns.

I verily believe we are cast upon an uninhabited Part of the Globe—not a human Being have I set my Eyes on since our Arrival. Methinks we should breathe a freer Air, if we could but extend our Acquaintance a little.

Ah! these vile Poets and Versifiers, what a Picture have they drawn of the sober Twilight, and ten thousand Beauties

and the Hon. Miss STRETTON. 31

Beauties that never had Existence, but in their whimsical Brains?

Twenty Guineas for a rustic Amour.

—No *Gothic* Swains are here to captivate; no Brutish Squire to humanize, nor sleek Chaplain to make a Butt of. O *Sir Ralph*, *Sir Ralph*, had you but fallen alone into this remote Pit, into which you have hauled me, with what heart-felt Satisfaction should I enjoy thy Thralldom?

That I could but transmigrate into some Animal, bound for the Metropolis! a Carrier's Horse, rather than fail.

—What an incessant Jingle should I make with my Bells, out of the Joy of my Heart, from anticipating my approaching Happiness?

32 *History of Lady Louisa Stroud,*

Miss *Stretton*, won't you walk?—
Excuse me, Sir *Ralph*—you see I am
industrious.

A kind Invitation that—Where do
you think the good Souls are ambling?
—even to a little Paddock, to view a
new born Calf!—my dear, dear Pen,
how infinitely am I indebted to you,
for saving me from such exquisite
Folly?

Incorrigible Girl! --- nay, do not
frown me from my Purpose---I was
drawing my tedious Epistle to a Con-
clusion, when I intended to have pro-
mised Amendment for the future,
obtained Pardon for the present and
past, and begged you to believe
me capable of one steady Sentiment—
an unshaken Affection for my dear
Louisa.

The

and the Hon. Miss STRETTON. 33

*The Hon. Miss STRETTON, to
Lady LOUISA STROUD.*

COMPANY, my Dear, at the
Abbey.--much feasting, frolick-
ing, joking, &c.

Now, it amazes me, that my good
Uncle and Aunt, who, I must allow,
have seen a little of Life, should apply
the Epithet of human to this Species
of Animals.

The first I shall introduce to your
Knowledge is, the Lady Mother; an
old, illiterate, lean Woman, with a
withered Face, but a youthful Heart.
She minces in Conversation, she minces
in walking, but at Table is a mere
Cormorant.

34 *History of Lady LOUISA STROUD;*

She affects much Taste in the Choice of her Cloathes; talks, with great Familiarity, of polite Life; will dwell whole Hours upon the Execution she did in the Ring, and at *Bellsizes*—Antiquated Places! for, in truth, she has been a compleat forty Years buried in Oblivion.

The gallant Knight, literally the larger, if not the better Part of this Original, is an over-grown Piece of Mortality; his Hand he generously bestowed upon his chosen Help-mate, but his Heart retained its native and insuperable Attachment to his Bottle and Hounds; his Affections being pretty equally shared between them.

Miss,

Miss, the eldest of their Hopes, is as tall as a May-pole, ungain and masculine. She can climb a Tree with a Monkey-Dexterity, and bawl as hoarse and deep a Note as any Boat-swain in *Europe*. In these two Particulars are comprised her whole Accomplishments.

But the Prime of the Flock is the Booby Heir, a sturdy Youth of twenty, with brawny Fists, broad Shoulders and curling Locks. *Hercules's* Club would be nothing for him to wield.

By the way, he is commenced Lover. Can you guess the Object of his Flame?

His Ideas and Behaviour are exactly similar with Sir *Vanbrugh's* Bumpkin, in the Journey to *London*.

36 *History of Lady Louisa Stroud,*

There is, indeed, a decent Girl of fifteen, a younger Daughter, who answers to the savage Appellation of *Nell*, whom I like well enough—'Tis Pity she has not an Opportunity of spending one Winter in Town, to cure her of some unaccountable Rusticities! She is not congenial with the others, 'tis true, but is such a little absurd Thing, as to be perpetually heightening, or (more properly) aggravating, the deep Dye of her Cheeks, by the Blush of Innocence.

I wished, my Dear, for a gentle Flow of Company, and behold this Inundation has broke in upon me!—

My Aversion to this Wilderness is augmented, since these Savages have emerged from their Dens. I have now lost all Patience—But in this, as

in

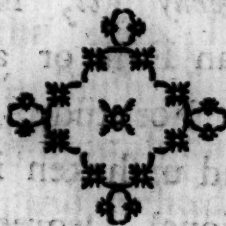
in all mortal Incidents, I do but multiply, by my Dissatisfaction, those Misfortunes that were before no less inevitable, than insupportable.

I begin to think, *Louisa*, that, upon due Reflection, if one was not incited to the Practice of Patience, as a *Virtue*, one should be prompted to give into it as a *Convenience*.

The old Proverb that says, *a Penny saved is a Penny got*, implies, likewise, that an Evil or an Affliction, borne with Fortitude, by preserving the Mind unshaken in its Peace, is an additional Degree of Peace, acquired by that Mind. There is Happiness in Prospect, and Happiness in Retrospect; the former is, I am convinced, the most delightful, but,
I am

38 *History of Lady LOUISA STROUD;*

I am half persuaded, the latter is most permanent. The first, generally, falls short of our Expectations; the last is out of the Reach of Disappointment or Diminution.—But, bless me! *Louisa*, how came I to preach? frightful! I must fly this Gloom. Adieu.



The

*The Hon. Miss STRETTON, to
Lady LOUISA STROUD.*

WE have had a Consumption in our family, and are dwindled, in the short Space of twenty-four Hours, into our native Littleness.

They are gone; returned to the Den of their Ancestors, and, like a Shaft in the Air, have left no trace behind them—Except, indeed, *Nell's* Docillity and Good Nature, which have made a kind of momentary Impression upon my Heart.

We were so early and suddenly deprived of their sweet Society, by *Roger's* (my bright Admirer) being indisposed. Intemperance brought on a Surfeit, a Surfeit a Fever; the Fever making

40 *History of Lady Louisa Stroud,*

making some little Alteration in his voracious Appetite, filled the old People with the most alarming Apprehensions for his Life; and, disapproving of that abstemious Regimen Sir Ralph, and a Country Apothecary prescribed, they conveyed him home, in order to be at Liberty to dispatch him their own way.

These People have not an Idea abstracted from a good Dinner; nor do they believe it possible to exist four and twenty Hours, without a dozen Meals—but enough of such unnatural Characters.

Shall I never have one chearful Epistle from you?—no Scandal stirring? Is, then, this still Life contagious? Do not let me continue long in Suspence, nor attempt to starve me into
a Dislike

and the Hon. Miss STRETTON. 41

a Dislike for Courts and Courtiers.
No, no, *Louisa*, it is Abundance, not
Abstinence, that cloy.

—

~~~~~~~~~

by any pretence of my own—there

to take them in the very I am this

*Lady LOUISA STROUD, to the*

*Hon. Miss STRETTON.*

you remarkable

**M**Y dear provoking, gay Friend,

I will not hereafter trouble you

with such dull Lessons as you have, of

late, received from me: To Time,

and the Goodness of your own Under-

standing, I commit you, and doubt not

but their united Force will work an

intire Reformation, in those few Re-

spects, that I could wish were re-

formed.

his Lady conveyed her

Manly

I will,

42 *History of Lady Louisa Stroud;*

I will, for once, approve myself worthy your best Gratitude.

I have two Histories for you, piping hot, from the Mint of Scandal—But I will not mortify your Curiosity, by any prefacing of my own—therefore take them in the very Terms this candid Town deals them out.

Colonel——, remarkable, you know, for his elegant Taste, and polite Behaviour, was taken off, by a Fever, the very Day you left Town.

It was most notorious, that he was greatly involved, as his pay was insufficient to support that genteel Life he was so peculiarly addicted to.

No sooner did the News of his Departure transpire, than a Friend of his Lady's conveyed her, most humanely,



manely, from those mortifying Scenes she was apprised would be the Result of that Incident.

Immediately the House was filled with clamorous Duns, who seized on all they found upon the Premises, as their only Resource, resolving to make the best of the little that remained.

It was proposed, that the Daughter, a fine, agreeable, well-bred Girl, should be placed with a Chamber Milliner, as an Assistant, her Board the only Gratuity required, as her Friends deemed it possible, for an ingenious Person to acquire a competent Knowledge of a Business, that wholly depends upon Fancy, from Observation.

The mortified Girl seemingly complied with this Proposal, and was, accordingly,

44 *History of Lady Louisa Stroud,*  
suddenly, received by a Woman of  
Eminence in the Profession; but, un-  
happily for her, a Gentleman, who  
had visited at her Father's, hearing of  
her Distress, and new Situation, found  
Means to convey a Letter to her, re-  
plete with Professions of Friendship  
and Love, entreating she would per-  
mit him to rescue her from the un-  
worthy Circumstances she was under,  
and accept of him as her Guardian  
and Parent.

Allured by the flattering Prospect  
of Ease, Plenty, and an Exemption  
from Dependence, she consented to go  
off with him, upon his own Terms,  
and entered into a State of Guilt and  
Obscurity, to avoid being a reputable  
Tradeswoman—the fatal Consequences  
of a wrong Education.

Instead

Instead of being caressed and extolled, for well doing and well meriting, she has forfeited the Society of the good and virtuous. Licentiousness, of every Species, must she engage in, however reluctant her Will; for those that have renounced their Virtue, have no Pretension to Decorum. They must mix with the Refuse of Mankind, the abandoned Libertine, and daring Prostitute. The Laws, that redress the public Grievances, prosecute them; nor have they a Home, or Property, that they are not liable to be deprived of. — The other History runs thus:

A certain Nobleman, of distinguished Rank and Fortune, had, about some twenty Years ago, an Intrigue with

46 *History of Lady LOUISA STROUD.*

with a noble Lady, the Consequences of which was, on her Part, a Divorce from her Husband, and a Son and Daughter by her Gallant.

These two Infants were committed, immediately on their Births, to the Care of a Brother and Sister, People in narrow Circumstances, though tolerably genteel in Life.

The former had taken unto himself a Wife, the latter an Husband; Steps that occasioned them to bear different Names.

The Boy was the first born, who was instantly conveyed to the House of Mr. Brereton, to be educated as his own Child, with an handsome Salary annexed, for its Provision and Support.

Miss



Miss made her Appearance the succeeding Year, and was received by Mr. Brereton's Sister, now Mrs. Frankton, upon the same Terms as the other little Stranger had been by her Brother.

The innocent Children were taken infinite Care of, partly, perhaps, from a Principle of Tenderness, partly, from Self-Interest. It is certain, however, the two Principles were so blended, as not to be distinguishable by a common Observer.

As the Habitations of these Relations were contiguous, the little Prattlers were inseparable. Their Wishes, their Inclinations, perfectly corresponded; nor was other Contest known between them, than who should oblige the most.

Whenever

Whenever they mixed with other Play-fellows, their Attachment to each other was singularly striking. Their Joys, their Cares were mutual; nor was there ever such a thing known, as a disgraced Favourite of the Little *Augusta Frankton's* being countenanced by *Billy Brereton*.

As they advanced in Years, this tender Sympathy, this instinctive Affection, was ripened into Love. How could it enter their harmless Imaginations, that such soft Friendship, as they were inspired with, could prove destructive to their Peace? *Brereton* and *Frankton* were Names that threatened them with no Impediment to the most intimate Union: They, indeed, understood they were Relations,

lations, but little conceived how near.

An innate Modesty taught them an unhappy Caution—So young to Love, they feared a Chiding, and, therefore, loved in Secret.

Many pathetic Epistles were interchangeably conveyed; many meaning Inadvertencies would have betrayed their tender Intercourse, had not their several Protectors been sunk in a most stupid Insensibility.

Behold the Ring purchased that was for ever to unite them!—Preparations, such as they were able to make, effected—the fatal Morn arrived—when, by the most fortunate Accident on Earth, the horrid Incest was prevented.

But ah! my Dear, they were saved from one Calamity, but to be plunged into another! the shocking Unravelling of their dark Story has embittered all their Days!

What, then, have not the Authors of their Existence to charge themselves with? How do the Innocent, in this Instance, suffer for the Guilty?

Adultery! do you not start at the bare Mention of it? but how must you tremble at Incest? and yet, I fear, such Incests are daily practiced. How does the abandoned Woman heap Sins upon her Head, sufficient to crush her to Atoms, who suffers herself to be overcome by Lewdness and Intemperance?

But



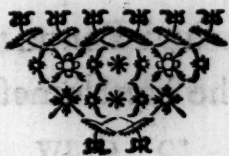
*and the Hon. Miss STRETTON.* 5

But I will leave you to comment upon these genuine Tales that circulate in this good Town, with many Aggravations.

That you, my dear Friend, may ever enjoy the unspeakable Felicity of an untainted Heart, is the sincere Wish of,

Your

LOUISA.



D 2

The

*The Hon. Miss* STRETTON, to  
*Lady* LOUISA STROUD.

WE have had a most extraordinary Visitor, my *Louisa*; a gay, well-bred, facetious young Gentleman. Do you not suspect my foolish Heart of some certain Palpitations? Upon my Honour, if you do, you do me Injustice.

No; notwithstanding he dances and sings most inimitably, is Master of eight thousand Pounds a Year, and has six of the handsomest long Tails imaginable, to draw his elegant Vis-à-vis, yet is my, once weak, Heart proof against him.

You are sorry for it!—nay, *Louisa*,  
—some unworthy Prepossession—I  
must

must laugh in your demure honest Face: You think of *Westbury*—Weary me not with your late renounced Whims—I tell you, you are wide from the Mark. If you must be let into the Secret (but I fear you will conclude I am turned Methodist) he is—O horrid to relate! he is, my Dear, an Atheist.

I think I was never so disgusted in my whole Life—so unnatural a Character! Why, *Louisa*, he is worse than the worst Inhabitant of the infernal Regions; for, are we not told, That the very Devils believe and tremble?

He has professed himself my Admirer, and pays his Court, by endeavouring to persuade me, that I am a mere gaudy Insect, that flutters for a

54 *History of Lady LOUISA STROUD,*  
Season, and then am to dwindle into  
my native Dust.

These are Tenets I am in no Danger of swallowing. What! after all the Value I have entertained for myself, to consent to rank with my Lap-dog? absurd, as daring, Insinuation!

And was this thinking Particle communicated to my Breast, only to inform me, that Annihilation must be my Fate?

O thou Almighty Being, who apparently presides over all thy glorious Works, vouchsafe to steel my Heart against this most pernicious, groveling Principle; enlarge my narrow Understanding, and bless my Lips with such Eloquence, as may enable me humbly

to



to assert thy Entity, and triumph over my hardened Opponent!

I am shocked, I am terrified at having the least Connexion with such a Wretch; his very Breath is contagion---Yet is his Form engaging, and, upon any other subject, I could listen to him from Morn to Noon, from Noon to dewy Eve, a Summer's Day.

The great Qualifications he possesses render him infinitely more dangerous, than if his diabolical Majesty had retained a less pleasing Advocate.

But would you believe it? He has the consummate Assurance to affirm, that his Sentiments are so far from singular, that they are correspondent with the received, and openly avowed,

56 *History of Lady* LOUISA STROOD,  
Opinion of many of the first Nobility.  
I confess myself unequal to the con-  
futing the whole of his bold Affir-  
tions, from my Giddiness and Inatten-  
tions; but I can take upon me to say,  
that I never, before, met with a Man,  
that had so far shaken off the Ap-  
pearance of Decency, as to profess him-  
self, publickly, to be an Unbeliever.

Join with me, my Dear, in wishing  
I may live to see him ashamed of his  
prophane Error.



*The Hon. Miss STRETTON to*  
*Lady LOUISA STROUD.*

AH! a good Letter this, my *Louisa*—two pretty Romantic Tales—I am studying a poetical Garb for them, and have already composed a Brace of Couplets. Don't you think there is Matter for a most delectable Ballad?

You expect me to comment upon them—is it my Talent?—Behold an Essay!

Our original Parents were placed in Paradise, to enjoy every Felicity that can please the Sense, without the least Allay—their Minds were in perfect Unison—no jarring Inclinations, no Opposition to each other's

58 *History of Lady LOUISA STROUD,*

Will, did they ever experience, until the evil-one infused the destructive Venom into the listening Ear of our common Mother — She then first erred, but, as it were, involuntarily.

At once, within her gentle Breast, was struck, from Self-sufficiency, that Spark of fell Discord and Unhappiness, ycleped Obstinacy. She would needs gad—her sober Husband, with a Mildness, truly exemplary, endeavours to dissuade her, by representing many Dangers to which she, single, would be exposed. But Pride had stopt her Ears to every Voice, save her own Self-will---She rambles, becomes curious, next disobedient, and then is irreparably undone.

In



In rueful Plight she backward flies  
to the late blissful Bower, informs  
her better-Half of her foul Crime.

He is shocked, laments, but soon  
he, also, feels a strong Desire to be-  
come wife. Shall his Wife have the  
Superiority in Knowledge? no; he,  
therefore, *wittingly*, partakes of that  
Guilt into which she had been *surpri-  
sed* by the arch Fiend.

Had Transgression rested with her,  
original Sin had never had Foundation,  
nor we been the Heirs of Tribulation  
and the Grave.

Soon after the Commission of this  
Fact, they incurred the Punishment  
of a living Death, being instantly  
banished Elysium.

They then fell to mutual Wrang-  
lings and Reproachings; and, in short,

60 *History of Lady Louisa Stroud,*

it strikes my frolick Fancy, that an insuperable Spirit of Enmity, Deceit and Revenge was, at that fatal Period, sown in the Heart of that lordly Creature Man, against us weak, frail Beings, which has been transmitted, from Generation to Generation, to that ruining Species; or why do we see that, instead of protecting us, they seduce, persecute and destroy? That this horrid, vindictive Practice is carried on, under the specious Appearance of loving us (pray, my Dear, observe) is most true: Yes, *Louisa*, their barbarous Schemes against our Peace and Reputation, are the Produce of their *Love*—Ah! let them tell us, then, how they would treat those they *hate*.

In

In Possession of Youth, Beauty, Friends, Reputation, Happiness, should one of these destructive Creatures come to you, and say, I love you to such a Degree, that I will deprive you of every Blessing you enjoy; I will entail upon your future Days (which, in the Course of Nature, may be many) deep Sorrow and Remorse; I will occasion your Beauty to decay, by your incessant Tears, if not blast it by Disease; I will render you odious and contemptible in the Eyes of your Friends; I will give your Reputation an irreparable Wound; and, instead of Happiness and Affluence, you shall experience wretched Poverty, Hunger, Oppression, Cold, Infamy; and all these dire Evils and Calamities

62 *History of Lady LOUISA STROUD,*

Calamities will I bring upon you, merely because you are the Object of my Affection—Would you not, my Dear, search for that Villain's Cloven-foot, who could address you in such Terms, in order to give him his proper Appellation?

Annihilation must, indeed, be a desirable Termination of such a Wretch's Life—Ah! my *Louisa*, whence comes it, that these Men, our Brothers and our Friends, as originally intended, have thus steeled their Hearts against us?

I wish our Legislators would take this gentleman-like Crime of Seduction into their Consideration, for the Benefit and Advantage not only of the present Age, but Ages yet unborn.



unborn.—Can these Beings, in whom the Power is invested, or rather by whom it is assumed, of establishing Laws, salutary for most Purposes, be unmindful of this glaring Calamity? —Can they, for the Sake of some private Indulgence to themselves, or, perhaps, their more wealthy Neighbour, suffer a Practice so fatal in its Consequence, to escape the severest Punishment?

Can these People reflect, that they owe their Existence to the Female Part of the Creation? That a Female is their Sister, Daughter, Wife, and yet leave the Sex exposed to the basest Artifices Man's Invention is capable of?

I am obliged to break off for an Hour or so—but I will have another  
Claw

64 *History of Lady Louisa Stroud,*

Claw at these Wolves in Sheep's Cloathing—I am sensible my Reflections are wandered wide from the Tale that gave Rise to them—there may be many unworthy ones of our Sex—but we are not the Seducers to Evil, until we have been first vitiated by Seduction.

*Saturday Night, Eleven o'Clock.*

Is it not a mortifying Reflection, my *Louisa*, that Custom and Law shall harass a poor Thief to Death—that Breach of Trust shall be deemed a Villainy of a deep Dye—and that the base Seducer of Innocence shall live with Impunity?

O horrid! How it chills my Blood, only to think upon the complicated Crimes vile Man is guilty of? (have I  
not

not Reason to speak feelingly?) Does he see an innocent, pretty Creature of fifteen, his own illegitimate child, perhaps; does he hear she is an Orphan, has none else but the Friend she lives with to shew her any Kindness, or afford her a Provision and Protection?—the Mark of Prey is instantly set upon her—she shall be undone.—In Sickness this Friend would have permitted her to repose her drooping Head upon her Bosom—in Affliction, would have sympathised with her, and consoled her—in Poverty have dealt out to her, with a liberal Hand, the necessary Supports of Life—and these good Offices she is prompted to perform for her, from compassionate Benevolence,—or, perhaps, having attended  
to

66 *History of Lady LOUISA STROUD,*

to her infant Prattle, and now believing her deserving.

But she is about to be deprived of these Blessings—she gets a Lover—who insinuates himself into her Favour, by the nicest Arts---allures her from her Friend---and quite destroys her---Her pillow, then, in Sickness, or in Sorrow, must be a hard Board---unless she can, by Fees, soften the rugged Nature of those Harpies, into whose Hands she must inevitably fall---she at last dies unpitied---as she had long lived unloved.

I am quite melancholy---Heigho---detestable Sex---indeed, *Louisa*, I shall never more endure them.

*The*



*and the Hon. Miss STRETTON.* 67

*The Hon. Miss STRETTON, to  
Lady LOUISA STROUD.*

I Have picked up a Companion, my Dear—I think the Country, like Death, levels all Distinctions—she is unacquainted with the Beaux Monde—a perfect Novice—her Age Eighteen.

Her faded Cheek, and frequent Sighs, bespeak her unhappy. I wish some Fellow has not been cruelly busy in destroying her Repose---could she but have perused my last Letter---what a charming Lesson would she have acquired? she has the Air of a Magdalen---and yet I like her. We shall have many Rambles together, unless the redoubtable Sir *Ralph* should

68 *History of Lady LOUISA STROUD,*

should interdict them. She boards with the Parson and his Wife---a very good Kind of old Couple--He is pious ---and Spoufy can make Salves and Hyfteric Water. I am in high Reputation with them, for regarding our late Visitor with an Eye of Contempt.

Sir *Ralph* begins to have some Confidence in me---I smell a Plot---ah! Good Sir, if you treat me so, I am ruined!--there is no resisting such generous Arguments--Had you but dealt with me thus, some Time ago, you had spared me---but, soft---I will not repeat Grievances.

Here is *Letty Stukeley*---will I be pleased to walk ?---she is ready to attend me---I must rally her on her demure

and the Hon. Miss STRETTON.

demure Countenance.---I come, I come---only give me Leave to Lock up my Papers.

O, my Friend, such a Walk! such a Discovery!---I am quite out of Breath---so agitated, I know not when I shall recover myself---I think I never will be curious again---alas! I have only been seeking out fresh Matter of Uneasiness---Oh, these Vipers! these Men! I certainly wrote my last Letter under some uncommon Influence---it was a prophetic Satire---I shall burst with Resentment---poor *Letitia*!---How could I so unfeelingly bear upon you, as to render a Discovery of your unhappy Circumstances unavoidable?---I blush at my own Temerity--but I was unsuspecting---pray judge me, my Dear---I own I  
am

70 *History of Lady* LOUISA STROUD,

am self-acquitted as I had not the least Intention to distress her.

As we were traversing a Lawn—beautiful, perhaps---but it had no Beauties for me---I, with my usual Giddiness, attacked my poor Companion---as thus---Such traces of Melancholy must have a Source---should detect her, when she was least aware of me---her Confession would give her a Merit with me, she was far from imagining---and a thousand more such cutting Innuendos did I unthinkingly pour forth---I fear I have heedlessly given Pain to many a worthy Heart. We had, by this Time, attained the Verge of a Canal, at the Extremity of the Park, a long which are dispersed many rural Seats. The poor, wounded, trembling, mortified  
Girl



Girl, hastily sat down upon one of them, and, bursting into Tears, almost petrified me with Astonishment.

Being somewhat relieved, she clasped her Hands together, and, with the extremest Earnestness, besought me not to despise her. I was unable to speak—I am—I am—hesitated she—a poor, fallen, wretched Creature—but I hope you will admit the Artifices by which I have been seduced, as some small Extenuation of my Guilt.

By an involuntary Impulse, I seated my self by the afflicted Penitent, and, taking one of her Hands, endeavoured to sooth her into Composure—How unhappy I was to have thus torn open

her

72 *History of Lady Louisa Stroub,*

her half-healed Wounds, I am unable to express.

It was some Time before she could so far recover herself, as to render her Voice articulate—at Length—My Story, Madam, is very concise—but, nevertheless, contains much Guilt, and an Infinity of Sorrow. I had the Misfortune to lose my Father in my sixteenth Year, and was invited by a Friend of his, during my Mourning, to accompany his Lady and Children to their Country-Seat. The three eldest Ladies were my Superiors in Age; for, Madam, this Baronet was the Father of eleven Daughters.

My Fortune was considerably lessened by the Death of my dear Parent, and my Mother, naturally fond of Gaiety, accepted of this Invitation

tation of me with uncommon Approbation; flattering herself, I believe, with the vain Expectation of my obtaining a rural Husband—I will confess, the Journey was undertaken with childish Rapture on my Part, ~~as~~ travelling was a Pleasure I was unaccustomed to enjoy.

I had been but a short Time in the Country before this Gentleman, this Father of a Family, under whose Protection I then was,—made me many inconsiderable Presents; and insinuating, that his Lady was rather of an avaritious Disposition, engaged me, for Peace-sake, not to mention them. I looked upon him as my best Friend, almost revered him for his Kindness, and too easily and fatally complied with this first unworthy Propo-

sal, for it proved the Rock of my Destruction.

He soon afterwards took an Opportunity of depositing ten, then twenty Guineas in my Hands, saying, *Letty*, you shall be my Banker—see that you do me Justice. When he had betrayed me into this second Impropriety, he made it his Business to engage me to play deep; and, upon my declining it, as unbecoming my Character and Circumstances, as well as disagreeable to my Inclination, he would whisper, that, surely a Man had a Right to do what he pleased with his own—that I should win or lose upon *his* Account—could I make any Objection to that? I intirely disapproved these Proceedings, notwithstanding



withstanding I could as soon have suspected my own Existence, as his Honour.

My Life had been a retired one: I knew but little of Mankind, nor did such a Conception ever enter my Heart, as a Design of the horrid Nature he was plotting against me.

He was too quick of Apprehension not to perceive my Chagrin and Dis-satisfaction, and artfully avoided every Opportunity of speaking to me alone, to prevent my restoring his Money, and escaping the Snare he had formed for my Entanglement.

So soon as he was well assured he had, by various Stratagems, drained my Purse, he engaged his Wife and eldest Daughters to dine with a Person of Distinction in the Neighbour-

hood, to whose House I had never accompanied them. I little imagined he intended to return Home, and was highly pleased at having some Hours to myself, which I determined to employ in writing to my Mother, for the same Sum I had involuntarily disposed of, the Property of the Baronet.

Whilst I was in my own Room, fulfilling this Intention, the Coach returned, into which this deep Designer packed the young Fry, as he called his little Children, and sent them three Miles for an Airing.

He then came into my Apartment, without the least previous Notice, and had the Temerity to lock the Door after him.

I arose

I arose in much Terror and Confusion—he addressed me with Ease and Politeness.—You seem surpris'd, *Letty*, at my Behaviour—but I have something of Importance to say to you.—I will not trespass upon your Patience, Madam, said the weeping Girl,—He had the Cruelty, at length, to demand the Money he had intrusted me with—I referred him to my Mother or Guardians; he damn'd them all—then half soothing, half menacing, insisted upon a Satisfaction—and, partly by Compulsion, partly through my Fear, Shame and Confusion, he obtained his wicked, inhuman Purpose.

I would not interrupt the little Happiness his Family enjoyed, by my unavailing Complaints — my own

Folly, Weakness, and Imprudence, were the Source of my Misconduct and Misery---therefore, to avoid his Brutality, I wrote a circumstantial Account of my ruined State to the Family I am now with, intreated them to apply to my Guardians for Remittances as a Boarder, and to receive, and pity me. They granted my Request, in its most extensive Sense, are as tender and indulgent to me as if I was their own Child, nor do they ever, even by a Look, seem to remember my Calamity---but, Oh! Madam, I can never forget it!--nor could impose myself upon you, for ought than I really am. If you can admit such a wretched Being to your Friendship, examine my future Conduct with the utmost Circumspection; and



and the Hon. Miss STRETTON. 79

and should you ever discover the least Appearance of the Wanton in it, expose, and cast me off.

I know my *Louisa* pities her—what is now become of my Vivacity?—it will not support me---I must weep—Adieu, adieu.



The

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*The Hon. Miss STRETTON, to  
Lady LOUISA STROUD.*

**A**RE you recovered, my Dear, from the soft Sorrow I brought upon your Heart, by my late Relation?—I love her unfeignedly—we shall be inseperable—my Virtue is not so outrageous, as to despise a fallen Innocent—no; in me she shall find a constant Friend. Poor *Letitia*!—I will sooth your melancholy Hours, and temper my Flightiness, with a little of your Grief.—I wish I could lessen the Weight of it!

I die for fresh Intelligences from the World. Cruel Creature, to suffer three Posts to elapse without writing! your Epistles are like Letters from  
the

and the Hon. Miss STRETTON. 81

the Living to the Dead; for am I not literally buried alive?

Ah! the dear, dear *Mall*! I fear I shall never more tread that delightful Path—It is not in the Power of Absence to wean my Mind from its wonted Attachments—Solitude requires a still Pulse, pure Conscience, and a total Exemption from Vanity and Ambition. O how I envy you, *Louisa*, your Enjoyments!—Fough—what a horrid Smell, *Roses*, *Junquils*, and the faint Violet impregnate the Breezes with! I detest all Kinds of Perfumes, except Musk, *Burgomot*, and so forth. How preferable the Prospect of dear busy *London* to this Spot of Inanimates! Unhappy *Letitia*! yours are, indeed, Misfortunes. How dare I repine?—I will not indulge

that deep, gloomy Thought—have you Jubilees this Summer? O for a Mask, a Dommine, an attendant Peer, and *Ranelagh Gardens*!—But have you renounced your Pen, *Louisa*?—ah! Heavens forbid. Then would your *Caroline* be truly miserable.—Audacious, base, designing Villain—not expose him?—I should have torn his Eyes out, and published my Wrongs from Pole to Pole—And so have invited Insults from the narrow-minded?—no; that would have been as misjudging as I ever am—I am a thousand Times more culpable than this poor Girl—I that was within an Ace—O my God! what a blessed Deliverance?—If ever I believe, or trust, or approve Man more, I think I shall deserve the greatest of Misfortunes.

Ah!



*and the Hon. Miss STRETTON.* 83

Ah! you deliberate Murderer, you.  
—what, you are plotting Conquests,  
I ween—who is your Cap set at now?  
that I could but rival you!—what Joy,  
what heart-felt Satisfaction?

How wandering and mutable is my  
Imagination?—I am, indeed, a frail,  
frail Being—it is well for me I am  
not under the same wretched Circum-  
stances with poor *Letitia*.

How cruel it is, that the Generality  
of our Sex, instead of sheltering a  
distressed, undone Creature, from the  
killing Blasts of Censure and Malevo-  
lence, are afraid to come near her,  
shun her as they would the poisoned  
Adder, and condemn her, without Feel-  
ing or Humanity! Should we not con-  
sider, that were our Conditions equally  
unhappy and friendless, with that same

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unfortunate one, we are for running down to Sorrow, if not to the Grave; that we should be for prejudicing some humane Ear in our Favour, or, perhaps, be tempted to impose ourselves upon the unsuspecting in a false Character? *Lejitia's* Ingenuity is a great Merit in my Eyes—but I must caution her against being so unguarded to others of her Sex, who, without Compliment to myself, are less generous and compassionate. No Situation upon Earth is so nice and critical, as common Friendships, held by a no less uncertain Tenour, than the next Breath can blast. But are these sensitive Plants true Friends, my *Louisa*? ought we to fall from our Fidelity, because Fortune has withdrawn her Smiles?—

You,

and the Hon. Mrs. STRETTON. 35

You, who deal in Refinements, solve me these Questions.

What are those Friendships one must retain by directing one Steps according to their narrow Conceptions of Right and Wrong? and who, should one's erring Feet stumble, would willingly assist in pushing one down the Precipice, and then insultingly give one this cold Salutation; Aye, 'tis good enough for you, I long foresaw what your Pride and Vanity would bring you to.

My Head aches—I am dissatisfied with myself, and all the World, except my *Louisa*, and my favourite *Magdalen*.

The

86 *History of Lady LOUISA STROUD,*

*The Hon. Miss STRETTON, to  
Lady LOUISA STROUD.*

A SERMON! a Sermon! I protest!—What a Pity it is, *Louisa*, that you was not bred a Quaker? how would you have harangued the Congregation of Friends? Not even the great *Drummond* could have vied with you, in either Elocution or Sentiment—Now have I something to lament;—I would you had been of the Fraternity!—Well, but you approve my Candour for *Letitia*,—that's a good Girl—you find I can act properly sometimes,—and, what is much more extraordinary, you can sometimes acknowledge that I do.—Severe!—I confess it,—  
but



*and the Hon. Miss STRETTON.* 87

but you must allow it to be just—But I forgot—strange News, *Louisa*—I am changed in my Humour—perfectly metamorphosed—am grown fond of the Country, with all its late neglected Beauties—can admire the warbling Nightingale—in a word, my Eyes and Ears are opened—passing strange!—

I have met with an odd Adventure—a Man—a Dog—a Gun—a green Field—I know not what to think!—it cannot sure be Love!—it does not prey *upon*, but plays *about*, my Heart—five Guineas for another Sight!—monstrous!—my Wager has conjured up a Sprite!—there is the social Sir *Ralph* shewing him his intended Improvements in the Garden—how shall I behave?—I am confused—fluttered—  
fur-

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surprised. — I'll join them — No, indeed, I won't stir — unless I am sent for — if they can be satisfied without my Company — it is very well — I can be easy without theirs — I am sent for — I beg your Pardon, my Dear — I must positively go.

*Wednesday Morn.*

A restless Night — dissatisfied Morning — what can this mean? — overlooked? — neglected? — not one Compliment? — O the agreeable Savage!

This young Gentleman, my *Louisa*, is the Son and Heir of Sir *Benjamin Foster*, the late Lord Mayor. He has had a polite, liberal Education, but has seen very little of Life, nor does he appear to have much Curiosity. It  
is

and the Hon. Miss STRETTON. 89

is exceeding well—I shall not be mortified.

How provoking *Letitia* is — to rise so late this Morning—I am glad she can sleep so contentedly—I am sure I have not closed my Eyes the whole Night—I hope Sir *Ralph* will not be so absurd, as to entertain this Youth with my History — if he should—*Stretton Park* shall not long retain me — I will — clope.—Is it my natural Disposition, *Louisa*, to be captious?—I think not—nor entertaining, I believe, have I any Pretensions to.—How I despise myself, for one Line of this curious Epistle? — Poor *Letitia*! — peaceful and uninterrupted may your Slumbers ever be — you ill deserve the Fate you have incurred. — Alas!  
how

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how despicable is the human Heart?  
—incapable of adhering for any  
Time to what is just or amiable—but  
I cannot reflect —forgive me, my be-  
loved Friend.



*Lady*



*and the Hon. Miss STRETTON.* 91

*Lady LOUISA STROUD, to the  
Hon. Miss STRETTON.*

**I**Ndeed my lively, my much loved  
*Caroline*, I not only forgive, but  
am highly pleased with, the Incohe-  
rence of your last Letter.

The Symptoms seem to threaten a  
a violent Attachment to this young  
*Foster*—what Advantages may you  
not derive from this common, this  
tender Impression?—You have never  
yet truly loved. I shall judge of your  
admired Swain's Merits by the Effect  
your newly conceived Passion has  
upon your Taste and Disposition. You  
will insensibly adopt his Manners and  
Expressions—consequently, if he does  
but possess a right Way of thinking, I  
shall

shall sincerely congratulate you upon your Acquaintance with him.

But, my Dear, you have not told me how that Acquaintance commenced—you wander from your Subject—leaving broken Sentences alone to signify your Meaning. How have you fluttered about the Torch of Love without ever once fanning your Wings? I should like much to behold the Man capable of fixing your, hitherto, unsteady Fancy—what Charm has he administered? I fear he is a Magician—for has he not already, by your own Confession, transformed you?

I am glad you corrected yourself, for the narrow Reflection your Petulancy induced you to cast upon poor *Letitia*—Abundant Cause has she, indeed, to curse the Author of her Misery, when  
even

even the common Refreshment of wearied Nature, if indulged beyond the fickle Period that Caprice may awaken another, shall be imputed to her as a Transgression! Ah, *Caroline*, it is not merely the Crimes we do commit, that we shall be judged for—have we had the same evil Inclinations in our Hearts, as in those of our Neighbours, and have we been restrained from the Gratification of them, merely from the Consideration of the World's Censure, or to escape the World's Law, will be the dreadful Question at the last Tribunal—and as this nice Determination can alone be made by the Supreme Searcher of Hearts, we ought to wait in silent Humility for that great Day, when all Disguises will be stript off,  
and

and the most hidden Iniquity be as clear as the Sun.

With respect to *Letitia*, if we may trust Appearances, she is literally an injured Innocent—betrayed, no less by her Inexperience, than the Villain's cruel Artifices. Happy is it for those Females, who enjoy the warm Shelter of a maternal Roof! Youth and Beauty are, in general, the greatest of Misfortunes; as the one impels us to Indiscretions and Follies, the other exposes us to Dangers and Temptations.—It is a copious Subject, my Dear, and I could with Pleasure expatiate upon it for Hours, but as you are an Enemy to Seriousness, (unless you yourself happen to fall into it) I will set some kind of Bounds to my preaching Inclination.

We



We should, indeed, pity those that have erred, and from the Error of their Ways, draw a Lesson of Self-instruction, to preserve our Feet from straying.—This, and this only, is the Use we ought to make of our Neighbour's Infirmities ; nor should they be ever either mentioned or remembered by us, but for this good Purpose. Not that I would be understood, that we should have connexion with, or countenance the Wicked, who persist in their Wickedness ; no ; it is the last Thing I would recommend—neither Reason nor Charity requires it. But such a fallen—repenting—unhappy Creature as the one you now have it in your Power to speak Comfort to, has an undoubted Claim to our tenderest Regard. Ah ! how little of generous Friendship  
would

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would she enjoy, if her unfortunate Circumstances were known to the World? Notwithstanding which Severity, the Brute, the Monster that occasioned them, would be as well received as ever. There is not any Conduct so unworthy the Character of a virtuous Woman as to smile upon the notorious Enemy of her Sex.—What preserves her from falling into his Toils?—Her Situation—her being out of his Reach—or, perhaps, her not having sufficient Charms to excite him to attempt her Seduction. The Men, my Dear, bad as they are, have one Merit superior to us—they are faithful to each other's Cause—they will defend each other if aspersed, and if they cannot intirely exculpate their accused Brother, they will tell you, by way of Extenuation,  
that

that, to their Knowledge, he is a very honest Fellow in every other Respect, and thoroughly good-natured—in other Words, that he is not a Pick-Pocket—nor would break a Woman's Limbs—but for her Heart or Reputation—the more he can wound them, the happier he is.

We, on the other Hand, so soon as the Breath of Suspicion begins to transpire, bear full upon the Scent, and should we be thrown out, we have amongst us some so malicious, that, like Blood-hounds, shall drive the unhappy from her Cover, and compel her to fly before the whole Pack, until she is unable to proceed farther, then faints, and sinks never to rise again.

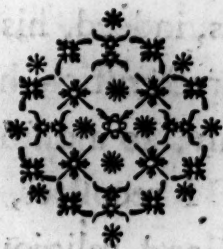
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O, my *Louisa*, let you and I be Exceptions to this inhuman, unnatural Rule—let the Cause of our Sex be *our* Cause.—What ! shall we assist the already too powerful Destroyer, and adopt it as an unerring Principle, to countenance the bold, the audacious Villain, that has deprived a Sister Female of her Virtue, or her Peace ?—For there are a set of harmless Creatures, that indulge their Vanity, in only engaging a young Girl's Affections, and then leaving her to be preyed upon by the cruel Worm of Discontent. (May it never be my Fate, or that of my dear Friend, to encounter such Barbarians) This is a Refinement, a Delicacy of Vice, unknown to vulgar Minds—they can have no Conception of the Eclat arising from being distinguished



guished by the charming Appellation  
of the Dear Inconstant—the Agreeable  
Rattle—the Insensible, &c. &c. all  
which are, in my Opinion, the most  
contemptible Titles this World can  
bestow.



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*The Hon. Miss STRETTON, to*  
*Lady LOUISA STROUD.*

**H**ORATIA *Foster*, my Dear, is a tall Youth, genteel and easy in his Mien and Address—is just turned three-and-twenty, and has spent five Years at the University—He is agreeably negligent in his Person—Negligence is, indeed, his Fault—perhaps his Characteristic—he carries that, and that only, to a displeasing Extremity.—Now I recollect, he is rather too serious—and religious also—Odd that!—thinks much of Mortality—a future Day of Retribution—in short, is the exact Contrast of our profligate Visitant.—He has a most delightful Bloom—his Eyes—ah, they have too much

*and the Hon. Miss STRETTON.* FOR  
much Indifference in them, or they would  
be the finest in the World!—There are  
a Set of Mortals, I am told, on this Ball  
of Earth, that will not allow Women  
to have Souls.—The Hottentots!—  
how I admire their Wisdom?—Now I  
am so whimsical, as to fancy *Horatia*  
has never an Heart—no accounting for  
these Fancies—if he should die within  
my Knowledge and Reach, I will make  
Interest to have him dissected.—I am  
convinced he is not made of common  
Materials—no Susceptibility!—asto-  
nishing!—yet, I can assure you, I am  
much improved, since I came into the  
Country—my Complexion, incon-  
testably evinces the Advantage of So-  
lar Hours—to say nothing of the  
Lustre—O' my Conscience, I question  
whether this Insensible knows if I have

Eyes or not—he regards their Sparkling with less Emotion than he would contemplate the Evening Star—Nay, I dare believe, he would give the Preference to the latter.—Ah me—that ever I should have lived to see this Day! I fear it is a Judgment upon me, for having treated these Matters so ludicrously.—I now find, to my Sorrow, that it is dangerous playing with Edge Tools—I am not like *Achilles*, invulnerable---though he, my Dear, was not without his mortal Part.

How did I become acquainted with him?—I hardly know myself.—I fancy he was dropt from the Clouds—on Purpose to—to torment me.

I was one Day traversing the Fields, when getting over an high, aukward  
Stile,



Stile, I perceived a beautiful Spaniel posted by a Gun—I was much surprized—had some Thoughts of retiring—but Curiosity, my *Louisa*, impelled my Steps—I was upon a little Rising, that rather projected—had it been near the Sea, I imagine the Learned would have called it a Promontory—but what are the Learned or Promontories to me? I advanced a few Paces, when, lo—it was very Romantic—there lay *Horatia Foster*—stretched out—in—a profound Sleep.—I intended to have tript by, without disturbing him—It is well for me, however, that I was not under the same Interdiction with *Lot's* Wife,—I had surely been a Pillar of Salt, *Louisa*—if looking back had incurred that Penalty.—My Feet and Head were never more

strongly at Variance—I viewed—and reviewed him—upon my Honour he was a fine Figure! now I stop'd—now I gazed—now he awaked—arose—and then addressed me with great Politeness—observed my Return Home—knew Sir *Ralph* of old—renewed the Acquaintance—and here we now have him upon a Visit.

What horrible long Letters does one Subject or other induce me to write?—I'll set the Man down, however, for the present—and take him up hereafter—Adieu, my loved *Louisa*.



*The*

*The Hon. Miss STRETTON, to  
Lady LOUISA STROUD.*

**H**ORATIA is allowed to be a very pretty Fellow—even by the demure *Letitia*—She blushes—looks down—on my Word I wish—but I will not wrong her—she cannot mean to rival me?—O for a Declaration in my Favour!—I have a Notion, *Louisa*, he is tongue-tyed—great Neglect—his Nurse much to blame—ah, no, that is not the Case—he can speak—upon every Subject—but the tender one I am inclined to listen to.

His Shyness bars every Felicity.—Why will he not let one flirt it a little with him? how delightful—to tease—to fret—to make him happy! I am

become vapourish—splenetic—petulant—poor *Jenny* has an ill Time of it.—hard that—how tyrannical to torment a worthy Heart, merely because the Situation of its Possessor is dependant?—nay, that very Dependance upon one, the Presumption, the Source of all our Ails and Ill-treatment of them. Ungenerous——despicable Practice! I will, *Louisa*, correct these blameable Dispositions—*Horatia* has them not—sees them in me, perhaps—and despises my Narrowness of Soul—mortifying Thought! but I will be perfectly reformed. His Servants idolize him—so humane—so considerate—remembers Fellow-creatures—Spirits of Men cannot brook Slavery—are intitled to Happiness—receive a little Bit of useless Dross—and in Return—de-

vote



vote their whole Time and Abilities  
to their Master and Mistresses Service.  
Excellent Principles! — worthy young  
Man! — how amiable is Benevolence  
and Humanity? — The Scales are fallen  
from my giddy Eyes—I see Things in  
their true Colours—and wish I was  
possessed of such an Heart—as my  
*Louisa's.*



*The Hon. Miss STRETTON, to*  
*Lady LOUISA STROUD.*

**W**OULD I had never beheld this Man—or that he would behold me with an Eye of Favour and Approbation!—He certainly despises me—Sir *Ralph* has betrayed me—I am confident of it, my Dear.

Judge, judge, if otherwise I should be shunned by a young Fellow!—am I then so detestable?

In the Garden—if he happens to perceive my Approach—he instantly strikes into another Walk—his Eyes never meet mine—he does not address me in Conversation—my Taste, my Opinion is of no Consequence to him, truly—why does he not treat this *Le-*

*titia*

*titia* in the same cold Manner?—but no;—she is the Object of his Attention and Regard—pray Heaven I may not be so base as to expose her Secret!—what would that avail me?—render me odious to myself—to him—and all the World—How deeply would his Compassion be engaged?—dangerous Attachment!—too nearly bordering upon a softer Inclination.

But could he be so indelicate—Pity me, my Dear—my Heart is mean—ungenerous—cowardly—and revengeful—but it shall not long remain so—I will either subdue its Rancour, or perish in the Attempt.

How is my Passion and Reason at Strife?—Reason! ah, my Dear—I fear I never had any—my Life has been one Succession of blamable Steps.—  
Uncon-

Uncontrouled, when an Infant — uncontroulable at a more mature Period. O what mistaken Fondness? — what cruel Indulgence? — Can it be expected, that a froward, perverse Will, unaccustomed to Opposition in its earliest, weakest Operations, should implicitly submit, when it is strong and confirmed? Custom is allowed to be second Nature; consequently, the tyrannical Child will never make a meek Woman.

What unavailing Reflections and Complaints? — nothing can now restore my Peace, but a Cottage and your valuable Company.

How do all my usual Supports fail me? — my Spirits droop — Vanity has lost its Charm — I know not the Felicity of interior Satisfaction — I have



*and the Hon. Miss STRETTON.* III

no hidden Store there—no grateful  
Resource—in this my Hour of Need—  
*Horatia's* retired Hours are calm and  
serene—his Heart does not reproach  
him with any unrepented Fault!—O my  
*Louisa*—how poor,—how wretched are  
the giddy gay, when overtaken by ei-  
ther Sickness, old Age, or Disap-  
pointment?—What is become of my  
sprightly Humour, my uninterrupt-  
ed Propensity to Mirth and Ridicule?  
—fled—alas! for ever—nor do I re-  
tain ought of my former Self—but  
my unabated Affection for my dear  
*Louisa*.



*Lady*

*Lady LOUISA STROUD, to the*  
*Hon. Miss STRETTON.*

**A**LAS! Poor *Caroline*! and is it, at last, taken in a Snare?—bear it heroically—for your own Sake—the more you flounce, my Dear,—the more you will be entangled.

Almighty Love!—this is indeed a Triumph!—Lead her in Chains of Adamant, to deter future Ages from daring to incur thine Ire.

But, does not your Glass deceive you?—are you really as agreeable, as when we parted?—ah, no—this heavy Chagrin you have contracted, cannot have brightened your Countenance—--if you do not guard against it in due Time—--*Fretful* will be wrote upon your  
Forehead

Forehead---and then, Admirers all---  
good-bye to you.---Thus do we, Hu-  
man Beings, in every Instance, defeat  
our own Purposes---you scare *Horatia*,  
and then blame him for flying you.---  
Love has proved an happy Mirror to  
you---shewn you your real, undisguised  
Self, in juster Colours, than even the  
Pen of your hardy Friend durst have  
done.---I rejoice---I exceedingly re-  
joice, in the downfal of your Vanity---  
and if I could believe you sufficiently  
humbled, would speak a Word of  
Comfort to you.

I can espy a Ray of Hope for you,  
my Dear,---overlooked, I find, by your  
careless or hasty Eye---Depend upon  
it, this Man dislikes you not---the  
Marks are strong upon him---you are not  
yet arrived to that Degree of Imper-  
fection

fection—as to be avoided—that I am very clear in—If Sir *Ralph* has, according to your Conjectures, mentioned your Adventure with *Westbury*—you may be assured he concealed every unfavourable Circumstance relative to you.—Indeed, if your Swain is what you describe him, your Story would possibly give Rise to some Doubts and Apprehensions, inseparable to true Delicacy—he may fear there is some remaining Traces of Affection in your Breast—I would not wound you—but this Affair may actually prove a Stumbling-Block to his Approbation of you.—Was I a Man—I am persuaded—nothing less than an intire, undivided Heart, would content me—I do not wonder, in the least, at their Nicety in this Respect—Levity is too

con-



contemptible, and the living Embers of a former Passion too alarming, not to shock a Lover.

If *Horatia* is worth the Pains—in order to win him—do you at all Times appear unreserved—and undesigning—If Chance should introduce your late unworthy Admirer, mention him without Warmth—let your Expressions be dispassionate—yet imply both Horror and Contempt—touch with extreme Nicety upon your early Time of Life—your Inexperience—the Misfortune of having contracted an improper Acquaintance—your Girlish Views—Liberty and a Title—how much you are astonished now at your Error, and Attachment to such Shadows—Things merely ideal.—Profess great Gratitude for Sir *Ralph's* Interposition—smile at  
your

your Reluctance to visiting the Country—paint your Abhorrence of it with Ease and Humour—and, my Life for it, you succeed.

O, my Dear, that we would but be wise—at others Expence!—what Anguish—what Remorse should we escape? One wrong Step is productive of twenty unpleasing Events.—But if we cannot be every thing we would wish, we must be content with being the best we can. As for *Letitia*, do not harbour one unkind Thought of her. She, who the other Day discovered so much Ingenuoufness in her Nature, that you yourself admired and approved her, must be incapable of forming any Designs, that ought to sink her in your good Opinion.

Did

—Did she feel the same Sentiments for *Horatia* that he has inspired you with—Anxiety and Confusion would betray them—exposed as she is to you, and sensible, as her late Behaviour proves she is, of her unhappy Condition, she would fly his Conversation, and your penetrating Eyes.

The soft Composure you mention, arises from a different Source—easily accounted for by a delicate Mind—Oh encourage the Smile of Peace that over-spreads her Face—which your Kindness alone, perhaps, gives Rise to. Let her partake your tender Secret—*she* well deserves your Confidence, who has so far confided in *you*—she will esteem the Trust as a grateful Token of that Friendship you profess for her.

Publish

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Publish her Misery to the World?—  
I could never love so cruel and vindictive a Spirit—Continue still my *Caroline*, and you will command my best Affections.



*The*



and the Hon. Miss STRETTON. 119

*The Hon. Miss STRETTON, to  
Lady LOUISA STROUD.*

AH me!—how unfit am I for Scenes of Tribulation? O *Louisa*, such a Calamity—could my Tears but wash it away—I would exhaust them all.

Every Self-care is now subsided—the lovely, the unhappy *Letitia*—how shall I tell you?—but she is—my God!—with Child!—What a Morning have we spent?—the poor Girl will certainly break her Heart—what can be done to save her from public Infamy?

I would accompany her to some Retreat—but Sir *Ralph's* Consent would

would be necessary.—He must not know particulars—you cannot but allow, amongst all his good Qualities--- Sensibility of Tenderness is not one--- nor is he gifted with a retentive Faculty—all he knows, he will blab.

Have you no Device?—can you not assist our dull Inventions?—Pretty, injured, worthy Creature!—if Half my Fortune could restore thy Virtue, how gladly would I bestow it upon thee!

In Love? fantastical—is this a Season for soft Passions?—this a Time for regarding Man with Approbation?—no; I abjure the Sex.

What will become of me, when I am deprived of my only Companion?—what will she not suffer in her approaching Extremity?—A Mother?—

ther? — Good Heavens! — O, my *Louisa*, save her, save her from the World's Malice! — Find out some kind Asylum, where she may repose her afflicted Head—at least amongst pity-feeling Mortals.

Is not this an irresistible Demand upon our Humanity? It is not in *my* Power to fulfil the Desire of my Heart—are you not my second Self?—Can I not depend upon your Care—your Kindness?—Give me this Instance of that Affection I have never yet had reason to doubt—and which is, and ever will be returned, in an adequate Degree, by your *Caroline*.

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*Lady LOUISA STROUD, to the Hon.  
Miss STRETTON.*

**Y**OU could not, *Caroline*, have imposed a more welcome Task upon me, than that of softening, in some Measure, the Severity of poor *Letitia's* Fate. --- Yes; my House shall be her Asylum—in me she shall find a tender and indulgent Friend.

Duty, as well as Inclination, incites me to take her under my Protection—for, is it not our Duty to protect the weak and unhappy?

My Mother will not return from *Bath*, till after *Christmas*; therefore, with me, she can be accommodated in every necessary Respect.—She shall  
be



*and the Hon. Miss* STRETTON. 123

be as retired as she pleases---and shall pass amongst our Servants, for the Widow of an Officer, who was killed abroad.

You know, visiting and being visited, is far from my Taste---I prefer the Conversation of one sensible, sincere Companion, to the empty Ceremony of the polite World. She will not put me, in the least, out of my road---let her not, then, continue in the Country, until her Condition may get Air---Suspensions are not easily removed---Envy and Malevolence will render them immortal.

Affure her I am prepared to love---to pity---to sympathize with her. In my Opinion she is an unhappy Victim of complicated Villany---intitled to the utmost Candour and Compassion.

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tion.---Suffer not her Spirits to be depressed---The Will of Heaven is not to be disputed.

I have not been so much affected at any thing, I may truly say, in my whole Life. I shall impatiently expect her, and to her Account will refer you, of the Reception she meets with, and of the Willingness with which I obey your Commands.



*The*

*The Hon. Miss STRETTON, to  
Lady LOUISA STROUD.*

**Y**OU are the very *Louisa* I took  
you for---I have long been ac-  
quainted with your amiable Qual-  
ities.

The patient Sufferer returns you  
her best Thanks for your humane  
Consideration of her---extolls you  
incessantly, and says---if her Cir-  
cumstances *could* admit of Allevia-  
tion, the Friendship and Candour  
of two such Ladies would not fail to  
have a happy Effect---But, added she,  
alas! Madam, my Afflictions are of  
such a Nature, that neither Time,  
nor the most heart-felt Repentance,

can mitigate them in the Eye of the severe judging World! The tender, helpless Innocent, continued she, whom I shall be the wretched Instrument of drawing out to Existence, will wound me but the deeper.— Ah me! should it be of the same unfortunate Sex with myself, what dreadful Anxiety would it entail upon me?

I advised her to be composed—lest such violent Agitations, should injure her Health.—O that the Almighty may be so gracious as to take the Infant to himself, to ease her Sorrows!

What to others (I mean legal Mothers) is the greatest of Satisfaction, will be to her an unspeakable Aggravation of her Misfortunes.—

Melancholy



Melancholy, truly melancholy, indeed, is her Fate!

I believe *Horatia* thinks we are mad---Grave Faces---sighing---affecting Privacy---it must have an odd Appearance---On my Word, the Man looks small upon it---I hope his Indifference will be mortified.

Your Disposition and his, *Louisa*, are perfectly similar---he may thank that Circumstance for my Approbation of him---for such is my Esteem for my Friend, that I must infallibly approve every Resemblance of her---I am drowsy, *Louisa*---I will take a Turn in the Garden---*Letitia's* Affairs totally dispirit me---I cannot write one lively Thing for my Life.

*One o'Clock.*

Ah! my Dear, my indulgent Friend,  
I have News! great News for you!  
*Horatia* loves me—is not insensible—  
knows I have Eyes—a Chin---Fore-  
head—and all handsome—A Letter  
from himself has communicated the  
pleasing Intelligence.

The Stile, indeed, is rather too  
stiff—but Sincerity, my Dear, you  
know, is not so perfectly degagée  
as Compliment.

Passing through the *Gothic* Wind-  
ings, that lead to the more *Gothic* Gar-  
den, one of Sir *Ralph's* Footmen  
approached me with a Letter.—  
For me, *James?* by an involuntary  
Impulse, holding out my Hand—Yea,  
an't please you, Madam—A hand-  
some Leg, and away tript *James*.

I was

*And the Hon. Miss STRETTON.* 129

I was out of Breath with Curiosity—The Superscription, in unknown masculine Characters. My Impatience to peruse the Contents would not permit me to reach an Alcove, before I broke the Seal—and standing motionless as a Statue, (in a green Walk) I read the soft, the flattering Confession of *Horatia's* Tendre for me.—Let your own Eyes be Evidences of my Felicity.

*Mr. HORATIA FOSTER, to the  
Hon. Miss STRETTON.*

Madam,

**C**AN you be unprepared for an Address of this Nature, so frequently as you have been an Eye-witness of my inconsistent Behaviour?

130 *History of Lady* LOUISA STROUD,

A Diffidence, an unconquerable Diffidence, though it sealed my Lips, by twenty Absurdities, spoke the tender Sentiments with which you have inspired me.

My Reputation and Fortune, I do not mention them as Recommendations; Sir *Ralph*, I flatter myself, would have no Exceptions to. But, Madam, if I am incapable of obtaining your favourable Consideration, without his Interposition, I must be for ever unhappy.

Love and Friendship are Operations of the Soul, too delicate to obey the Voice of Solicitation, or Constraint; they must flow spontaneously; an interposing Hand causes them to shrink.

You



You appear ingenuous—superior to the little Forms that Prudes observe—Esteem is a generous, a noble Sentiment—worthy the most refined, the purest Heart. If—ah! Madam, if you do not feel a Repugnance to admitting me to an improving Share of your valuable Approbation, as Time and Acquaintance may authorize; let me but hear the pleasing, the encouraging Assurance, from your amiable Mouth, and I will immediately give Sir *Ralph* all the Satisfaction he can desire,

I am, Madam,

With proper Respect,

Your most obedient Servant,

H. FOSTER.

I was so unguarded, as to exclaim aloud—This is the very thing I wished! when, turning my Head, who should I perceive, on the other Side of a little Hawthorn Hedge, but—the gentle *Cymon*!

My Confusion was unspeakable—There happened to be a little Break, through which he bounded—and with a Voice, and Arguments most enchantingly sweet, did he sooth me into such a self-satisfied State—I think—I never experienced any thing so pretty in my whole Life.

He conducted me back to the House—I flew to communicate the Particulars of my new Situation to you—*He* to Sir *Ralph's* Study—Lord bless us, my Dear, to propose himself for—I protest for—a—Husband for  
your

*and the Hon. Miss STRETTON.* 133

your Friend. But hold you there, Sir—no, no, it must not come to that, neither—we will be very friendly—tender—and all that—but no Lord and Master in the case.

My Spirits have been so upon the Stretch, they require some Relaxation; therefore, good *Louisa*, imagine a number of pretty Things, as said by me in the way of Conclusion.



*Lady*

*Lady LOUISA STROUD, to the*  
*Hon. Miss STRETTON.*

**A**T your Whims again, my Dear?  
It is a strange Thing you can  
never write properly, but when you  
are in the Hum-Drums, the dolo-  
rous, as you phrase it.

Not marry him?—Abominable Af-  
fectionation—you do not deserve to  
be so happy for your Insincerity.

But you have really an Inclinati-  
on to proceed upon Platonic Princi-  
ples—Try the Experiment—gratify  
your Inclination for Refinement—and  
my Cap against yours, you are Mo-  
ther to a—before a Twelve-month's  
at an End,

By



By the way, *Caroline*, is it not very cruel and unjust, that Men and Women shall be criminal, and that an innocent Being, the involuntary Consequence of their Guilt, shall be stigmatized with so opprobrious a Name, as the one I have omitted?—But I can neither correct nor repeal Laws, therefore they must remain as deficient as I found them.

Poor *Letitia's* Story will not now, I presume, be long a Secret, from this Man of Might.—Husbands and Wives, good ones I mean, cannot conceal, even the most minute Particular, from each other—When once this Knot is tyed, where must your *Louisa* lodge her Foibles?

*Horatia,*

*Horatia*, you will tell me, will be silent as the Grave—that he loves me no less than you do.

No, no, my Dear, it will not do—*Horatia*, though he will be your second Self, yet I cannot so far familiarize him, as to chuse to expose myself to him in any Respect.

I hope you will not return to *London*, until every thing is happily over with our Charge—she must not be hurt—by being introduced under such humiliating Circumstances. Let not our own Happiness extinguish humane Considerations in our Breasts.

The utmost Felicity she can now attain, is bare Contentment—We ought to beware lest we pull down with one Hand, what we build with the other.

Desire

and the Hon. Miss STRETTON. 137

Desire her to write to me herself, for your giddy Vertigo is returning upon you—and woe be to her if she relies too implicitly upon your Management.

Believe me, *Caroline*, I shall most sincerely rejoice at your happy Establishment. May many—very many Years of mutual Satisfaction be your Portion—nor our past Loves ever be forgotten by us.



*The*

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*The Hon. Miss STRETTON, to  
Lady LOUISA STROUD.*

**I**NDELICATE *Louisa*—how came you by your course Ideas?—I the Mother of Bastards?—How I hate you.

It is all settled—and I am soon to commence Mrs. *Foster*.

These, my Dear, are the first truly happy Days I ever knew—how different his Behaviour to a Wretch's—ah! I will not name him—I have related the whole Affair to *Horatia*—he appeared rather chagrined, but it is worn off—Better now, thought I, than hereafter.

I am



I am astonished, that I could ever be entertained with the empty Cox-combs about Town—I was certainly formed for more rational Amusements.—Really, *Louisa*, I have a very tolerable Understanding—if it had been but properly cultivated.

A wrong Education gives the Mind a wrong Bias—that, in Time, creates a wrong Judgment—and wrong Steps upon wrong Steps, are the Consequence.

*Letitia* will come up in another Month—she is amazingly altered.—I intend to have my Mother's Jewels new set—as for Cloaths, I shall accommodate myself in Town.—If this Man should prove surly and morose—I am undone for ever.—My Mind mis-gives me strangely—If he should de-  
ceive

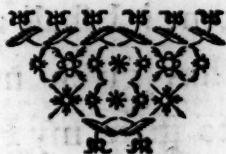
ceive me now, *Louisa*?—O horrible!—  
and retaliate some of my old Practices  
upon me?—How small should I sing—  
a Willow—a Pond?—Ah! a Drowning  
would, then, surely be my Lot.

*Lady Stretton* has been very oblig-  
ing upon this Occasion. It is solemn  
Parade though, much like the Prelude  
to an Execution: I wish it was over—  
I have my Doubts, and my Wave-  
rings—I should make a mighty ridicu-  
lous Figure, if I should fly off—not at  
all unlikely.

Why did not you set me the Ex-  
ample—and let me reap the Benefit of  
your Experience?—You have deprived  
yourself of a Multitude of sagacious  
Sentences—I shall have the upper hand  
in Wisdom—I promise you I mean to  
shine

shine—Perhaps I may never again have so advantageous an Opportunity.

The Post-man is at the Gate—A whole Pacquet of Letters—I hope you have had the Grace to write—Not one for me?—I'll assure you, when I am Lady Mayorefs I will not visit you—Sir *Benjamin* is reputed to be worth a Million of Money.



*The Hon. Miss STRETTON, to*  
*Lady LOUISA STROUD.*

**H**OW shall I tell you, my *Louisa*?  
—ah! Love was but the Beginning of my Sorrows!—Poor *Horatia* has received the mortifying Information, that his Father has stop'd Payment; and it is supposed, he has ruined himself by too extensive Connexions.

What a Scene? I shall never recover the Shock it has given me. He will not consent to share my Fortune—His Notions of Honour are strained to an unnatural Degree. Thirty thousand Pounds would support us like petty Princes in the Country—Why will he not be persuaded?

He



and the Hon. Miss STRETTON. 143

He begs to speak with me. I hope he is convinced of his Folly—I die with Impatience, to know his Determination.

\* \* \* \* \*

Now all is at End with your wretched *Caroline*!—her Peace, her Happiness is for ever blasted. Where are now the flattering Prospects that so lately presented themselves?—Obscured, totally obscured. *Horatia*, the charming *Horatia* has sacrificed his, and my Felicity to a too nice Sensibility.

He has left me, never more, perhaps, to return. Such a Parting!—O, my *Louisa*, are not these trying Circumstances? Have I not Reason to call my Destiny severe? This, this

is

144 *History of Lady Louisa STROUD,*  
is Sir Ralph's fine Management!—  
He applauds the young Man's Notions  
—an old Hunks—he looks upon Mo-  
ney as the *summum bonum* of all Things.

It may be a very pretty Possession—  
but I miserably experience, it cannot  
purchase Contentment.

My dear, handsome Fugitive—  
whither wilt thou wander?—what  
Dangers, what Difficulties encounter,  
in order to remove an Impediment,  
that exists only in thy too delicate  
Imagination?—If I can survive this  
Calamity, I think I may bid Defiance  
to every Evil.

Should his Father's Affairs be  
capable of a tolerable Accommodati-  
on—if Reports have been aggrava-  
ted—and some Part of the fatally  
dispersed

*and the Hon. Miss STRETTON.* 145

disperfed Fleet get safe to Harbour—  
I fhall fee my *Horatia* again in a  
fhort Time; but, if the contrary  
fhould happen, what will become of  
your afflicted Friend?



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H

*The*

146 *History of Lady* LOUISA STROUD,

*The Hon. Miss* STRETTON, to  
*Lady* LOUISA STROUD.

SOME small Consolation—A Letter  
from the dear Man—Read it—  
read it—I am incapable of comment-  
ing upon it.

*Mr.* HORATIA FOSTER, to *the Hon.*  
*Miss* STRETTON.

Dear Madam,

IT is too necessary to my Repose,  
not to flatter myself, that you are  
reconciled to the Step I have taken.  
I fly you for a Time, merely to render  
myself more worthy of you—it is a  
severe Conflict—but I will not mur-  
mur.

The



The Proof you condescended to give me of your invaluable, your disinterested Regard, shall ever be present to my Remembrance, and will infallibly incite an Emulation in my Breast—to be an humble Imitator of so noble an Example.

My Father's Affairs are in a very unhappy State, which renders my taking a Voyage to *India* indispensable. I need not mention my Affliction, at being obliged to quit a Kingdom, that contains the Object of my tenderest Affection.

But it is to alleviate a Parent's Misfortunes—that Reflection is sufficient to silence every rising Disatisfaction. Oh, Madam, how unworthy should I be of that Place I hold in

148 *History of Lady* LOUISA STROUD,

your Approbation, if I could be so unnatural as to be unatentive to the Concerns of the Author of my Existence?

If the Tye of Nature has no Force, on what can we depend?—Has he not preserved me, during my tender Infancy?—Has he not watched my growing Years with fond Delight?—And shall I not, in Return, avert (if Heaven see fit) the impending Misfortunes of his old Age?

Your Letters, Madam, will be my only Consolation—you are too generous and humane to deny me them.

You will be my Companion to *India*, the Companion of my Soul. To you all my Wishes, my Thoughts will

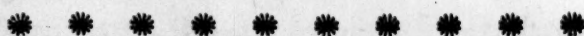
will be directed.—My Prayers for your Safety and Happiness will be offered up, without ceasing. Oh, may they be propitious, and preserve me from being wounded in that mortal Part of me!

I shall continue only one Week longer in *London*—do not omit writing—and, ah! repeat to me the pleasing Assurance, that you will be only mine.

What is Life, deprived of those we love?—'Tis but a kind of lingering living Death—I am frail—Oh, I feel my Weakness—and know not how to write—a—long Farewel!

Encourage me, my *Caroline*, to perform my Duty—let not the Man whose Presumption has aspired to the Possession of your Heart, fall from what is right.

Seas, Distance, nor the Hand of Time, can ever lessen the soft Impression of my Heart—until it ceases to beat, it will be yours.



To *India*? My God! Could any thing have happened more unfortunate?—Why did Sir *Ralph* bring me to this Place?—Why was I cast in the Way of this amiable Man?—I was too, too happy—but it is now past—and I shall dearly pay for the Felicity I have enjoyed.

The Time is also approaching when I shall be deprived of my Companion—the compassionate—the tender—the wretched *Letitia*.—Ah! Do my Sorrows equal hers?—No no, I feel too sensibly—the Ease I have hitherto experienced



*and the Hon. Miss STRETTON. 151*

experienced has quickened my Sensibility—I shall be enured, bye and bye—but I must become callous, my *Louisa*, before I can be satisfied with my present State.

I now begin to taste the bitter Cup of Disappointment, without one Allay.

*Letty* has shed an Ocean of Tears over me, forgetful of her own Sorrows.

I cannot weep—my Grief is too poignant.—I would not now return to *London* for the World—Solitude is my Choice—I will visit every Walk, wherein my *Horatia* and I have enjoyed each other's Conversations.

152 *History of Lady* LOUISA STROUD,

*Letitia* must leave me next Week—  
her Condition cannot be longer concealed—the Parson and his Wife are anxious for her Departure. It is to be given out, that she is going up to Town, to be with a Relation, during the Extremity, she, poor Soul, has herself to go through. A Nurse is to be engaged for the Child, and to meet her half way, as I will likewise—Take care of her, my dear, for she has a most valuable Heart.



*The Hon. Miss STRETTON, to  
Lady LOUISA STROUD.*

I HAVE wrote to my *Horatia*—perhaps too tenderly—but is he not my Husband?—The Husband of my Affections?—Was not the indissoluble Knot to have been tyed in a very short Period? Bad as Men are, I do believe him an Exception to the general Rule—he knows not to deceive—He an Hypocrite?—I will not harbour such an unworthy Thought.

Should you think I have practiced too little Caution, do not mortify me, by telling me so—What I have written, I have written to Mr. *Foster*.

*To Mr. HORATIA FOSTER.*

Dear *Horatia*,

**Y**OU cannot, surely, wish me to be so insensible, as not to be shocked at your *East-India Expedition*?

Whilst I applaud the Motive, I tremble for the Consequence.—What Dangers must you not encounter?—What Difficulties endure?—I think of them with an Horror I cannot describe.

Oh that it could have been dispensed with!—I do not mean to shake your worthy Resolutions—no, my Friend, my Lover, persevere — your filial Piety will be a Shield of Defence to you.

Confide



Confide your best Wishes upon my Faith and Truth—I never will forsake you—your *Mind, Horatia*, not your *Fortune*, was my Attachment—preserve then that Mind from Contamination, and the Object of my Esteem remains.

Ah! what is this Wealth, that Men toil after? Is it not, at last, an illusive Acquisition?—If it does not bring Integrity in one Hand, and Health in the other, Happiness and It are incompatible.

Study Philosophy, my *Horatia*—learn to despise Riches—continue to love me—and return in Safety—then will *Caroline Stretton* not complain of her Destiny.

I hope you will take every Precaution to prevent Colds, those fatal Beginnings of most Disorders.—Have me ever before your mental Eyes, as an Incitement to Self-preservation.—Consider it is for my Sake, my Peace-sake, *Horatia*, that I make this Request—then surely you will not fail complying with it?

Write to me by every Opportunity, as I will to you—and be assured, I will live for you alone, no other Being of your Sex can I ever approve—I have but one Heart,—that once bestowed, 'tis gone for ever—Was I to lose you, my Affections are widowed—for have they not been wedded to you?

The particular Circumstances you are under, induce me to indulge the  
tender

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tender Impulse of my Heart, without Restraint; my Language is the Language of Sincerity,—unstudied, uncorrected.

Had you continued one Month longer at *Stretton Park*, my Inclination and Duty would have been united—it would then have been my Praise, as well as Glory, to speak the affectionate Dictates of my Soul.

I am softened by your Departure—my Mind is weakened—I ought, perhaps, to blush at what I have written “but cannot what I ought”—Do not condemn me—I must confess that I am unable to bear this long—this unexpected Separation, without  
many

158 *History of Lady LOUISA STROUD,*  
many tender Pangs—May Heaven be  
propitious to my *Horatia* !

\* \* \* \* \*

Who could ever have believed that  
I should be so taken in?—O *Louisa* !  
That I could but have you in a  
similar Condition !—Then should I ap-  
pear less ridiculous.

But is not mine a singular, a severe  
Misfortune?—Do, let me have your  
Sentiments upon it—methinks it  
would greatly soften my Ills to be com-  
passionated—What can be a finer Balm  
for a wounded Heart, than tender  
Friendship?—Ah! My *Louisa*, Ten-  
derness is one of your amiable Qua-  
lifications—you have now an unex-  
pected Object to practice it upon.

*Letitia*



*Letitia* will leave me To-morrow—  
My God! what will become of me?—  
I shall pester you with Letters—no  
Creature to converse with—no Amuse-  
ment—no Employment—to while  
away the tedious, melancholy Hours—  
unless I am allowed the Liberty of  
exercising my Pen.—That I could but  
accompany *Letitia*!—Vain Wish!

She will make easy Stages—her  
Condition forbids Fatigue—I shall be  
extremely anxious, until I hear of her  
safe Arrival.—Oh, that the Wretch,  
that has caused her Misfortunes,  
could but suffer for her!—But Ven-  
geance will pursue and overtake him,  
I hope.—With what real Satisfaction  
could I attend the Fellow to the  
Gallows!

160 *History of Lady Louisa Stroud,*

Gallows!—He would defile the very Halter.

I think it is a Six Months Voyage to *India*—What a terrible, tedious Time to be cooped up in a wooden Conveyance—floating about on the merciless Waves!—Is it possible, do you think, that Change of Climate can ever change his Love? It is hard trusting; for, is he not a Man?

*Horatia*, my Dear *Horatia*, pardon this involuntary Levity—I do believe thee as incapable of Inconstancy as my own Heart—and that, I am confident, is fixed for ever.

*The*

and the Hon. Miss STRETTON. 161

The Hon. Miss STRETTON, to  
Lady LOUISA STROUD.

**L**ETITIA, and this Epistle, will reach you much about the same Time. Dear, injured Girl! — How happy might she have been, had she never made one fatal Visit? How tenderly affecting our Parting? — I must know every Post, how you go on — To your kind Care I once more commit her.

I believe she is weak enough to wish her Child may live — she never absolutely confessed it, but ever mentions it with a Mother's Fondness — The Tye of Nature must be strong indeed, when even Disgrace, and a Detestation of the Father cannot cancel it.

My

162 *History of Lady LOUISA STROUD,*

My *Horatia* is embarked—exiled for ever—and here am I a solitary *Eve*—half distracted—half broken hearted—I send you Copies, only, of the dear Man's Letters; the Originals are too precious to be parted with.

Mr. HORATIA FOSTER, to the Hon.  
*Miss* STRETTON.

My amiable *Caroline*,

**H**OW has your late Condescension revived my drooping Spirits?—Your Tenderness is my Support—your Affection the Reward of my Sufferings.

What Woman, besides yourself, could make such refined, such delicate Distinction?—Yes, my Love, we are wedded in Mind—It's true, our Hands have not been united—but is  
not



not the Union of Hearts the essential Tye?

And will you never, my valuable Friend and Mistress, will you never bestow your Person upon another—no, not even if I should no more return? Flattering Promise!—Endearing Acknowledgment!—Will you then, living or dead, be only mine? That was my most afflicting Pang, the Apprehension of your conferring that Happiness upon a Rival I was so near attaining.

If the Grave is capable of Reflection—if the Dead are not unconscious of the Actions of the Living—how will the Sting of Dissolution be taken out, when I behold the dearest Part of me devoted to her God and my honoured Memory?

Can

Can a Heart, truly subdued, resume its wonted Liberty?—Can the Object of its Virgin Love be obliterated from her Remembrance? Can she deliver herself up to the Arms of another?—Does the Prostitute more?—Oh, my *Caroline*, now has my Voyage lost all its Terrors—Should the Deep yawn to receive me—I devote myself its Prey—it cannot deprive me of my beloved. Years, to the Eye of Eternity, are but a Span—was my Mortality shook off, they would appear the same to me—a short Space—and then my *Caroline* and I should be reunited, never to part again—O how should I hover over that Bed, that was about to surrender you to the Grave!

Did

*and the Hon. Miss STRETTON.* 165

Did you not perceive much Constraint in the Style of my last Letter?— I feared—because I loved. Humbled, by my altered Circumstances, I endeavoured to suppress my tender Inclination—I could not address you as my own.—The common Practice of the World is to withdraw the Esteem it lends, if Prosperity retires—but you are noble, generous, and constant.

Your Letter has already been read a thousand Times by me—and will be read a thousand, thousand Times more—Upon its inestimable Contents I shall subsist until my Return.

Pray for me, my Dear—I shall have much Confidence in your Prayers—

ers—I have not a Wish, with respect to you, that I dare not address to the Almighty. Your present, and your future Happiness, are equally Objects of my tenderest Regard—and as it is uncertain, that we shall ever meet again here, I am anxious for our meeting hereafter.

May every good Angel guard you, and whisper that Peace to your Heart which the World, with all its Vanities, cannot give.

\* \* \* \* \*

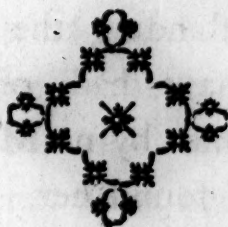
Do you not esteem my religious, my valuable Lover? There was a Time, when I should have despised such serious, rational Sentiments—but Folly and I have now shook Hands.

A Ser-



*and the Hon. Miss STRETTON.* 167

A Sermon, at many Seasons of my Life, would not have had half so happy an Effect upon my Mind.—Rejoice with me that I am become a new Creature, and let me hear from you by the Return of the Post.



*Lady*

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*Lady LOUISA STROUD, to the*

*Hon. Miss STRETTON.*

**Y**OUR Friend, my *Caroline*, your  
amiable *Letitia*, is safely lodged  
in my House. She bore her Journey  
surprisingly well, and has almost re-  
covered, by a Night's Repose, the  
little Fatigue she did endure.

Notwithstanding the frequent Ac-  
counts I have had of this lovely  
sufferer, I was by no Means prepared  
for what I found her. The Beauty,  
the Innocency of her Aspect—the  
pleasing Simplicity of her Manners—  
and her deep Mortification and Sor-  
row, attaches me irresistibly. I can-  
not

not make a Merit of obliging her—I cannot boast of my Generosity or Compassion—what I do for her seems to flow from Self-love—it is a Pleasure, a Satisfaction to me, to render myself serviceable to her.

Oh, that vile Man, that has occasioned the Destruction of so engaging a Creature!—But God knows how to punish him—I dare not invoke the supreme Vengeance.

She seems as much at Ease as her Condition will admit. Her lively Gratitude for the few Benefits we have conferred upon her is extraordinary—her Patience and Resignation exemplary. When she is suffering to such a Degree, as to occasion many Changes in her Countenance—no

170 *History of Lady LOUISA STROUD,*

Murmur, Complaint, or Dissatisfaction escapes her Lips.—And shall not I be in Charity with one who has, undoubtedly, by her Repentance, obtained an Advocate for her Peace with Heaven?

It is the abandoned, who glories, who persists in Acts of Shame, that is to be despised.

Every thing is prepared for the important Event—God grant her Life may not become the Forfeit of her Transgression!

The Author of her Misery continues well—at Ease—he is not yet come into any Misfortune—but his Day of Retribution, my Dear, must be at Hand.

Ah!



Ah! my *Caroline*, what quick Advances have you made towards becoming the very Being I have so often wished you?—You have, indeed, bounded beyond my utmost Desire—it would grieve me, if your Vivacity was to be utterly lost—I only would have it *tempered* with, not *absorbed* by, Seriousness.

I am in Love with your beloved—your Tryals are certainly great—but I have Hope your Happiness will be the more permanent.

Were it not for these Allays, the Mind would degenerate into Insensibility—Ease is to the Soul, what Health is to the Body—those that have never experienced Discomposure, like those who are unacquainted

172 *History of Lady LOUISA STROUD,*  
with Pain, cannot set a just Value  
upon their Exemption from Sickness  
and Sorrow.

Pious Youth! May thy worthy  
Endeavours be crowned with Suc-  
cess—and the Reward of thy filial  
Labours be my *Caroline's* Heart!

Such a Man, my Dear, only could  
have drawn your Merits out—such a  
Man only could have set a proper  
Estimate upon them.

As to your Epistle—I think it the  
natural Result of Sincerity—I am no  
Friend to Dissimulation—but we are  
taught it by the Male Monsters. I in-  
tirely acquiesce with you, that, where  
Minds are united, the Engagement is,  
in a Manner, confirmed—but these  
Men, that turn with every Blast—  
one

one does not know when one has them — nor where to find them — constitute the Hazard. Amazing Creatures!—When we fly, they eagerly pursue—but once overtaken—before we have attained that tremendous Goal, Matrimony, their delicate Fancies are disgusted, and we left in the Lurch—But if yours is a wavering Animal, where shall we seek Permanence?—If he has an honest Appetite, he will not only *digest*, but *feed* upon your Kindness—It is not the nicest, but the most vitiated Tastes, that are incapable of relishing Sincerity.

But keep up your Spirits, my Dear Girl—you are now barely twenty—a Couple of Years hence—you will be young enough for a Wife—I will re-

174 *History of Lady LOUISA STROUD,*  
main single, merely to be your Bride-  
maid.

*Letitia* desires her grateful Love—  
I kiss your Hands, and beg you will  
assure yourself you still retain the  
best Affections of your *Louisa*.





and the Hon. Miss STRETTON. 175

The Hon. Miss STRETTON, to  
Lady LOUISA STROUD.

ENGLAND no longer contains  
my *Horatia*—he is now launched,  
my Dear, upon the boundless Ocean—  
I was premature in my former Con-  
jectures.

How does my Heart now tremble  
at every Breeze?—A Storm must be  
dreadful! I could terrify myself with  
twenty imaginary Bug-bears—but why  
do I not rest my Hopes and Fears upon  
the Lap of Providence?—Does not the  
same Almighty Power preside over the  
Sea, as Land?—Whatever is best for  
us will, I am convinced, be our Fate—  
My lofty, high-reaching Vanity re-  
quired

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quired much Humiliation—Adversity  
is an excellent School-master—its  
Corrections are keene and salu-  
tary.

Error, my Dear, is the wide-beaten  
Path, that lies perpetually before  
us—the narrow track of Propriety is  
either so lightly, or so seldom trod,  
as to be hardly distinguishable—it  
does, indeed, require a clear Sight to  
discover it, and steady Resolution to  
pursue it.—Who would have suspected  
it lay across the Seas?—My *Horatia*  
treads it—He has, I am persuaded,  
found it much incumbered, with  
Thorns and Briars—but his Perse-  
verance will, I hope, surmount its every  
Difficulty.

Sir.

Sir *Ralph* and his Lady are very obliging, and, to confess the sober Truth, very sensible, eligible Companions—Reason, my *Louisa*, in Youth, is Reason in old Age—except indeed, that in the former it is weak and easily overborne—in the latter—too frequently supported by Obstinacy and the Pride of Self-opinion. I am now convinced, that they are not so incompatible as I once imagined them—for let Age but abate somewhat of its Rigour—Youth of its Folly—and I find they may be tolerably reconciled.

The Parson of the Parish is a truly worthy Man, his Wife an humble Imitator of his Piety and Resignation.

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Power, which would retard that Happiness.

Do you desire a Copy of all my *Horatia's* Letters?—Perhaps I weary you—The inclosed was written some few Moments before he embarked.

Mr. HORATIA FOSTER, to the  
Hon. Miss STRETTON.

I HAVE, at this Moment, my *Caroline*, my elected Bride, the Prospect of that Ship (all Hands employed in weighing her Anchors) that is to convey me from my native Soil—and all that I hold most dear.

It is an heart-piercing Sight—but the Voyage is inevitable—and I will not wound your tender Nature.

A -



As I have now the extreme Mortification of departing—I trust I shall have the unspeakable Satisfaction of returning.—On that Hope I live.

May Sickness, Sorrow and Misfortune never reach your peaceful Dwelling—may your kind Sentiments of me remain unchanged—and *England*, or the Grave, will afford balmy Peace to—your most affectionate, and unalterable, *Horatia*.

\* \* \* \* \*

There, perhaps, is the last of this Good young Man!—Oh, how will I treasure up his Epistles!—Never, never can I forget him—never, never can I love again!

From

From you, my *Louisa*, and you, my *Letitia*, must all my future Pleasures be derived.

Ah! who would have imagined, that the volatile, the gay *Caroline Stretton*—would ever have fallen in Love with Green-fields, bubbling Streams, and friendly Ecchos?—Yet is all this come to pass—they have supplanted my Self-affection, and my blameable Affection for the noisy World—but my Affection for my *Louisa* (the only proper Sentiment of my Heart, before it became devoted to *Horatia*) is as lively and strong as ever.

*The*

*and the Hon. Miss STRETTON. 183*

*The Hon. Miss STRETTON, to  
Lady LOUISA STROUD.*

**S**IR *Ralph* and *Lady Stretton*, how I do despise myself, for having been so long blind to your amiable Characters? What polite, what kind Attention do they pay to my Amusement? Since I have declined engaging in several Parties, they had formed purposely for the Dissipation of my tender Sorrow, they have given a neighbouring Family an Invitation to spend some Time with us.

You cannot conceive, my Dear, how their Goodness wounds me—What horrid Ingratitude have I not practised towards them?—How have I hitherto

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to neglected, nay condemned, their humane Affiduity? How did my rebellious, my odious Heart rise against them, only for saving me, first from Destruction, then sheltering me in this venerable Mansion, from the Ridicule and Derision of my idle, unthinking Acquaintance, and the ill-natured Town?

*Horatia*, my valuable *Horatia*, has awakened every latent, proper Sensibility my Heart was endued with.

How has my poor Brain been busied in the Pursuit of Folly and Vanity?—But the Charm is now broken—and my captive Mind set at Liberty.

**In**



*and the Hon. Miss STRETTON.* 185

In Solitude will I recollect, in order to amend the Errors of my Judgment.

Had I been united to Mr. *Foster*, without experiencing the cruel Pangs of Separation, I had been utterly unworthy of him—and should, I doubt not, by many indiscreet Sallies, have disgraced his Choice, and wounded his Repose.

I can now, most feelingly, acknowledge, that once hard and unintelligible Lesson, which you have so kindly, though ineffectually, endeavoured to inculcate—that apparent Misfortunes are Blessings in Disguise—the Certainty of which is so deeply impressed upon the virtuous Mind, as to preserve it unshaken through

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through every Difficulty and Change  
of Life.

Do not sentence me to a dark Closet  
and Straw-bed, for throwing a few  
Suggestions upon this Subject into  
Jingle—Poetry, you know, is the Off-  
spring of Love, and the Darling of  
Solitude.

*When rushing Winds through Forests  
break,*

*The Cedar from its Root is torn;  
But when its Rage o'er Mountains bleak,  
By ancient Æolus's Hands are borne,  
Nought can they sweep from off their  
steady Brow,  
But the green Moss, by Nature bid to  
grow.*

*The*

and the Hon. Miss STRETTON. 187

*The Storms of Life thus bursting o'er  
The Mount of Virtue in our Mind,  
Take from our Sum of Good, no more  
Than from the Mountain sweeps the  
Wind.*

*The ripen'd Wish of Vanity may fade,  
Nature's wild Produce, form'd by Folly's  
Aid.*

*But should the vast surrounding Sky,  
Dissolve in Vapours from our Sight,  
This Orb of Earth in Crumbles lie,  
The Sun withdraw its chearing Light,  
The virtuous Mind would undismay'd  
remain;  
Its Strength, that Power that did the  
World sustain.*

Could

Could I but enjoy your agreeable Company, and improving Conversation, how would it soften all my Woes?

But why wish Impossibilities? Even the Gratification of that Desire would be productive of the utmost Unhappiness to poor *Letitia*—and I doubt not, but the whole Chain of Events are under the same excellent Regulation.

What is the Disappointment of the Humour or Inclination of one particular Individual, in Comparison of the essential Advantage, or necessary Protection, of a worthy suffering Fellow Creature?—I must present you with a second poetical Flight.

*In*



and the Hon. Miss STRETTON. 189

*In Search of that rich Gem Content,  
Thro' Mazes, intricate, we run,  
To gratify each Wish are bent,  
Tho' oft we wish ourselves undone.*

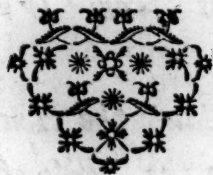
*Our Passions strong, to Error prone,  
Do so mislead each fond Desire,  
That happy is that Man alone,  
Whose Thoughts are prov'd in Reason's  
Fire.*

*As Fancy works, that can refine,  
The Right from Wrong, without  
Alloy,  
To Virtue's Cause the Heart incline,  
And purge the Dross of Vice away.*

*These are the Weapons, my Louisa,  
with which I endeavour to kill my  
heart-felt Care—as they are perfectly  
innocent, |*

190 *History of Lady* LOUISA STROUD,  
innocent, I willingly indulge myself,  
and think I may so far presume upon  
our Friendship, as to trespass upon  
your Patience, especially when I can  
assure you, it contributes, in some  
small Degree, to mitigate the Sorrows  
of your much loved *Caroline*.

My best Wishes attend *Letitia*—  
I am impatient for Accounts of her  
Health.



*Lady*

*and the Hon. Miss STRETTON. 191*

*Lady LOUISA STROUD, to the  
Hon. Miss STRETTON.*

I THINK my dear *Caroline* and her *Louisa* have, of late, changed Characters—but how shall I confess, that these strange Effects are produced by one and the same Cause?—Yes, my Friend, the soft Intruder has paid my hitherto inaccessible Heart a Visit, within the short Period of the last two Months—The Impediment to my communicating is now removed.

I must acknowledge the little Urchin has met with so welcome a Reception, that I know not when he will depart.

You never saw the young Lord *Roxburgh*—he is returned from his  
Travels

Travels perfectly accomplished. A Letter from my Brother, now at *Venice*, (with whom this Nobleman has contracted a strict Amity) was his Introduction to my Acquaintance and Approbation.

They certainly are an encroaching Sex, my Friend—but there was no resisting the gentle Impression—I therefore submit, without murmuring, to my present Destiny.

He has declared himself—his Proposals were unexceptionable—but I have told him, I will never change my Condition until the Friend of my Heart has the happy Opportunity of renouncing her Virgin State.

Some



Some little Dissatisfaction (common upon these Occasions) was betrayed by my Lover. I know them, my Dear—they pretend their Impatience proceeds from their violent Love; but I would believe them the readier, if they would honestly acknowledge it was from a Desire to play the Tyrant.

Controul but ill suits their domineering Natures. Opposition to their Wills is another Thing they cannot reconcile themselves to. But I intend to play my Swain a few Pranks for your Amusement.

He shall fetch—carry—leap a Stick—and twenty pretty Fancies, before I honour him with my Hand. Joaking a-part—I will command in

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the Respect abovementioned—it is a Tribute to my Friendship that shall not be dispensed with.

But let not *Self* engross my whole Attention. *Letitia's* Concerns are ours.

My Lord admires her modest Aspect, and says, the Humility of her Behaviour is truly amiable, by being as far removed from Servility, as it is from Affectation.

She continues much as she was—the great Event is hourly expected—I believe the poor Creature's Patience is sufficiently exercised—for she flattered herself she should have been reduced to a more decent Size, long before this Period. But, she says, her Punishment is lengthened, in order to make the deeper Impression upon  
upon

*and the Hon. Miss STRETTON. 195*

upon her Heart—it is the due Reward of her Infamy—and, but for the poor Innocent's Sake, she would rejoice in her Sufferings.

I am glad to hear you will have Company at the *Park*, as I hope their Presence will contribute to divert your Thoughts from taking too serious a Turn. Do not, my Dear, in your Renunciation of Folly, degenerate into Enthusiasm—that is a Child of Melancholy, as Poetry is of Love.—Let not your charming Spirits be depressed—you may correct the Improproprieties of your Conduct, by pruning your Disposition of its exuberant Liveliness—Chearfulness is inseparable to Health and conscious Virtue.

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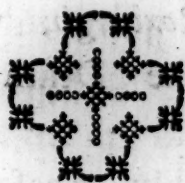
*Horatia* loved you whilst you was in the Meridian of your Vivacity—nay, possibly, that might be a principal Attraction—Judge, then, how you will mortify, instead of delight him, if you suffer it to be obscured, by the unpleasing Cloud of deep Reflection?—Mediocrity is, indeed, a very difficult Attainment—but those that do not fight, do not merit the Palm. Victory is to the *brave*, not the *weeping* Commander.

Oh, this Love, this Love—it is an unaccountable Passion—but so incident to human Nature, that few, if any, of the Lords or Ladies of the Creation escape it—No Period of Life is secure from it's Influence—three-score is full as susceptible as fifteen.—



*and the Hon. Miss STRETTON.* 197

teen.—Happy, therefore, is it for us, my *Caroline*, that ours is an early Folly—I mean within the Verge of thirty—for Decency's Sake. Adieu.



K 3

*Lady*

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*Lady LOUISA STROUD, to the*  
*Hon. Miss STRETTON.*

**W**E were greatly surprised, last Night, by the unexpected Arrival of my Brother.

It seems, the young Nobleman he accompanied into *Italy*, on parting with Lord *Roxburgh*, was suddenly recalled by the Death of his Father.

He is highly pleased with the Terms my Gallant and I are upon—but, my dear *Caroline*, I will confess to you, in the strictest Confidence, that his Return has overwhelmed me with Concern and Perplexity. His ~~Morals~~ are totally debauched—his  
Conver-

*and the Hon. Miss STRETTON.* 199

Conversation is one Succession of Blasphemy and Ribaldry—*Letitia* seems frightened at him—he appears much charmed with *Letitia*—what the Event may be, is impossible for me to divine—I dare believe I may confide in her Honour—but I have Reason to apprehend the utmost Brutality from him.

I prevent his seeing her as much as I can, but his Evenings, that are not spent with us, are intirely devoted to his Bottle—and when he is drunk, he is quite a Mad-man.

So soon as her Condition will permit, I will return her into your Protection—there she will be exempt from Libertine Persecutions.

*Sunday Morning, Four o'Clock.*

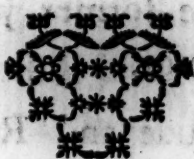
*Letitia*, my Dear, is just delivered from the Grave—by the Birth of a Daughter—she has suffered the utmost that human Nature could sustain—her Doctor despaired of her Life—but he has since communicated some pleasing Hopes of her Recovery. Never can I forget her Misery!—not one Support but me, had her poor drooping Spirits—and when, in order to give her Comfort, she was wished Joy of her little Girl—she fainted—every one imagined never to recover more.

These are the Triumphs of Seduction!—Triumphs worthy only of the Infernal below!—Could but the unthinking ones of our Sex have been  
been



been Eye-witneffes of this Scene, it must have proved an infallible Antidote against every Species of Vice.

Oh, my *Caroline* ! How impossible is it for us to be sensible of that Felicity Virtue secures to us, unless we can have a View of the other Extream?— But I can no more—I am summoned by *Letitia*. Adieu.



*Lady LOUISA STROUD, to the Hon.*

*Miss STRETTON.*

**Y**OUR Wish, my Dear *Caroline*, is accomplished — *Letitia's* Infant only breathed to die.

When I entered her Apartment, I was extremely shocked to find the little Innocent in the Agonies of Death — the Conflict between Nature and Diffolution was strong — at length the former yielded to the awful Conqueror.

The Fortitude and Resignation of its unhappy Mother, were truly amiable. I rejoice, said she, in this Scene of Horror — Its Sufferings are, indeed,

~~and the Hon. Mrs. STRETTON.~~ 203

indeed, great, but they will soon be finished, never more to be repeated.

We have consigned the Remains of this temporary Existence to the Mansions of Rest.—The first and last Office, how early succeeding each other?

Our Friend is in a fair way of Recovery, and looks sweetly—my Brother is impatient for her making her Appearance—I fear it will be impossible to disappoint him, as she is too weak to undertake her Journey for a Month at least.

It is surely a long Time since I have heard from you: I hope you have some agreeable Companion to prevent your Time hanging heavy

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upon your Hands. Tell me every minute Circumstance of your Situation; for no one thing that affects you can be beneath the Consideration of the Friendship of

Your

LOUISA



The

K C



*The Hon. Miss STRETTON, to*  
*Lady LOUISA STROUD.*

A SLIGHT Indisposition, my *Louisa*, was the Cause of my Silence: My Inclination for Scribbling was unabated, but my Disorder lying in my Eyes, obliged me to desist for a few Days.

Your two last Letters had various Effects upon me; Pleasure, Concern, Anxiety, Satisfaction—the latter, however, prevails, as *Letitia* is out of Danger, and the poor helpless Evidence of her Shame happily disposed of.

I beg you will not suffer *Self* to be predominant in your Heart, nor find Pretences to - detain my Friend  
from

from the narrow Reason, that you feel a Reluctance to parting with her.

You have your Lover's Visits to compensate every little inevitable Vexation—a Happiness, I fear, I shall never more enjoy. Give me back, therefore, the only Person (except yourself) who has the Power to soften my Cares, and lessen my Anxiety.

We are disappointed of the Company we expected, by their taking themselves suddenly to Town; but *Roger* and *Nell* are once more strolled to the *Abbey*. I suffer the unmeaning Conversation of the former out of Consideration for the latter, who really has no other Fault, than being some Years too young for me.

more

*Roger*

*and the Hon. Miss* STRETTON. 207

Roger has acknowledged, as well as he knows how, that I am the Attraction at this venerable Seat. He persists in paying his aukward Devoirs to me, notwithstanding Sir *Ralph* has, at my Request, informed him I am engaged.

The Bumpkin, my Dear, is horribly mortified at being rejected; and very politely tells me, I may go farther a-field, and fare worse.

He has no Conception of Honour or Honesty; the Law is his Regulator; nor would he start at the Commission of any Crime, was he not withheld by that rigid Monitor.

Agreeable

Agreeable to his Tenets, I am not only at Liberty to desert my *Horatia*, but am a proper Object of his Persecution. *Out of Sight out of Mind*, is a favourite Proverb of his—and he never fails to add—I may depend upon it, it is the Case with my Lover. I leave you to judge the Felicity I must enjoy, in Converse with such a Boor—But enough of him for the present.

I have a little Commission for you, my *Louisa*, which I must insist upon your punctually discharging. Tell my Lord *Roxburgh*, that I assume so much Right in you, as to flatter myself my Approbation of him will be no Disadvantage to  
his

oldest son.



his Suit; that I have heard such a Character of him, as to consider him as an Honour not only to Nobility, but the *English* Nation in general; that I shall rejoice at his speedy Union with the Friend of my Heart, and beg it may not be delayed in Compliance with any idle Fancies of your Suggesting. Instead of alleviating, be assured, my Dear, you would infinitely aggravate, my Mortifications by such a Conduct as you intimated. What! shall I prove an Impediment to that Felicity, which would communicate itself to me in so ample a Manner? I thank Heaven I am capable of friendly Sympathy,

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Sympathy, and am no less disposed to  
raise the Joy, than share the Woe,  
of each deserving Friend. Let this  
Admonition suffice. Adieu.



*The*

